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ABSTRACT

Strategies are delineated for solving elementary school classroom problems. After an introductory chapter, chapter 2 reviews problems cited by 24 kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers and the strategies chosen as likely solutions to the problems. Strategies later found to be unsuccessful are discussed if they illustrate the nature of the problem or situation described. Strategies and problems concern health, language, motor difficulties, immaturity, active negative behavior toward adults, distrust or passivity toward adults, disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, bossy or meddlesome behavior, leading and following peers inappropriately, shyness and withdrawn behavior, unhappiness, lack of self-confidence, self-concept, lack of initiative, academic difficulty, miscellaneous problems such as stealing, dependence on peers, oddities or mannerisms of personal behavior, and need for attention, as well as behavioral, academic, and management concerns. Chapter 3 describes whole-class strategies which are considered suitable for any style of primary classroom. These concern the establishment of a positive and responsive learning environment, managing social problems, ways of dealing with problms caused outside the classroom, classroom discipline, academic routines, self-chosen learning activities in the classroom, developing academic concepts and skills, and meeting the needs of the teacher. Chapter 4 offers conclusions and recommendations. A description of method is appended. (RH)

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PROJECT THRIVE

Ways and Means:
Strategies for Solving Classroom Problems
Volume I

Principal Investigators
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by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

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The Honourable Sean Conway, Minister

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PREFACE

The strategies outlined in this manual grew out of a larger investigation into children's temperament and its effects on school adjustment. We expected that knowledge of temperament characteristics would help teachers to predict, and hence avoid or mitigate, social or emotional problems that children might have in school.

Teacher ratings of children's general status as "thrivers" and of their temperament characteristics were related both to academic achievement and the incidence of individual problems. (See Volume II for a report of the research findings.) However, temperament traits predicted neither the actual problems diagnosed nor the strategies chosen to solve them. This finding was rather puzzling, since the teachers' ratings and descriptions of their pupils were usually confirmed by independent observations. It became clear that factors other than pupil behaviour were affecting the teachers' decisions: their own teaching practices and beliefs. The variety of philosophies, methods, and attitudes of the teachers in the study and the effects of their discussions provided an unusual opportunity to test ideas and perceptions by applying them in diverse settings. With the exchanges came new viewpoints and different decisions; several of the teachers tried new methods, found them effective, and so extended their options for dealing with new problems.

This project profited from the efforts and good will of many people. The classroom teachers, who met for discussions and offered insights into the development of strategies, provided the raison d'etre for the entire study. The board consultants provided advice, support, and ideas for implementation, and the children provided many hours of amusing, interesting, and occasionally heartbreaking observations.

Special thanks are due to Cheryl Bruce and Elizabeth Morley, who participated in all aspects of the project, including the classroom observations. Derek Richards designed creative computer programs. Wendy Mauzeroll assisted with the data organization and she, Joan Scott, Pam Pratt, and Jay DiPasquale typed many, many words. Our thanks to all.

M.R.

A.B.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Project Thrive was twofold: first, to investigate the effects of children's temperament, social and self-directive abilities, and self-confidence on their adaptation to schooling; and second, to study teachers' concerns and thereby to generate classroom strategies to help the children to "thrive." The second goal is the focus of this volume.

The Nature of the Project

Beginning in October 1981, we met in small groups with twenty-four Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers from four boards of education to discuss their problems with program, management, and particular children. Ideas and suggestions were exchanged for dealing with their concerns, either by helping children adapt to the school setting or, in some cases, by modifying the setting to respond better to the children. At several subsequent meetings, we evaluated the strategies and planned new ones as needed.

After the meetings, we visited the classrooms to observe how the strategies were implemented, and to get an intimate understanding of the daily patterns of routines, interactions, and approaches to learning. We also observed the children designated as "concerns", and exchanged findings with the teachers.

The classroom observations were both formal, utilizing prepared observation forms, and informal. The latter often were participant observations when a teacher or child desired some assistance. In some classes, the teachers requested frequent visits and were eager for our feedback; in a few, we were merely tolerated. One teacher withdrew from the meetings and observation program, but did consent to be interviewed about her concerns and strategies. Although very uncomfortable with another adult in her classroom, she provided some valuable insights about strategy decisions.

Use of the Observation Data

The observation data proved useful in a variety of ways. Usually they confirmed the teachers' perception of problems, but often provided clarification that led to more effective strategies. For example, one child classed as "disruptive" was observed to behave badly only

when incited by another child or when frustrated by work that was beyond his abilities. Changes in the seating plan and provision of suitable work led to improved conduct.

Occasionally, observation indicated that problems ascribed to particular children were actually the result of management factors that could quite easily be modified. For example, several children were noisy at certain activity centres and disturbed the teacher's group lessons. Rather than continually remind the children to keep quiet, the teacher directed them to other centres during the reading period and to the noisy centres later.

Classroom Style, Problems, and Strategies

Much research on teaching has focused on the description of teaching methods or approaches, with the intent of finding the most effective methods. However, Roberts and Orpwood (1982) questioned the value of such general approaches for suggesting improvements in particular teaching situations. They indicated that teachers perceive their own practices as "unique responses to their own different and unique situations" (p.2). Thus, a teacher's approach in any given instance depends largely on an intuitive response, based on an intimate and practical knowledge of the pupils and their classroom environment. Our use of strategies assumed that each teacher would use this understanding of the children in ways that would both help the particular individuals concerned and fit in with the complexities and customs of the classroom environment.

It was clear that the teachers' practical knowledge was indeed an important element in their thinking. Several commented that a given strategy would work (or not) "in this class" or would have to be modified "for this child". The fact that a strategy had been used effectively in another classroom would encourage the teacher to adopt it, but the decision was always made with reference to the particular child and class.

However, it was also evident that the teachers had reflected on (and in some cases studied) the more global approaches to teaching, and had in many cases chosen a method they viewed as effective for themselves and for most of their pupils. Moreover, the teachers in each group represented, to some degree, the prevailing philosophy or orientation of their school boards, and this factor influenced their perceptions of the classroom. Although all the consultants encouraged activity-based learning, the usual methods in two of the boards

were more traditional than those in the other two, where most of the participating teachers had adopted some form of open teaching (Marshall, 1981; Traub et al., 1972). This difference in orientation led to differences in what counted as problems. Teachers in the traditional boards voiced concerns more frequently with group discipline, control of behaviour, problems of academic routines (settling down to work, completing assignments, following directions), and children's general maturity and language and motor development. Teachers in the more open boards considered that, with time in a flexible and open program, most children would progress without special help, and that most problems with work habits, attentiveness, or misconduct resulted from curriculum or management practices. The former teachers were therefore likely to favour strategies directed towards changing the particular child's behaviour or developing different expectations suitable for the child's stage of development or home background, while the latter looked for academic or organizational approaches related to the overall structure of the learning environment.

In one board, which placed a strong emphasis on play, very few concerns were voiced with respect to either classroom situations or individual children. This was especially true in the Kindergartens, where only two children were cited as problems (both were dealt with by increased teacher attention). The Grade 1 and 2 teachers in this group had adopted a free-play approach to environmental studies, and strove to establish a generally responsive and non-threatening classroom climate. They therefore avoided directive or constraining strategies during the play period. Several other teachers in the study opted for individualized open models with children working independently at their own pace, while two who used traditionally structured approaches were nevertheless deliberately flexible and open in their personal relationships with the children. Thus, the teachers all saw themselves as having a distinct personal teaching style, which provided a framework within which strategies were chosen, planned, and evaluated.

The kinds of problems named and strategies selected varied not only with the teacher, but also with the board philosophies. For example, in the more open boards, the use of extrinsic reward systems or of behaviour modification techniques was viewed as manipulative or even coercive; in the others, these techniques were used quite comfortably and successfully by some teachers, who viewed them as useful methods for "letting a kid know that he can act acceptably", "letting him know where he stands", or simply "giving him something to work for".

For the most part, however, the teachers shared similar objectives and hence used similar strategies for dealing with individual children's problems. Virtually all the teachers used talk as their chief means for dealing with individuals. Talk was the usual way of providing more attention, encouragement, positive interaction or reinforcement, and direct instruction (this last included reminders, mild reprimands, explanations of rules or teacher expectations, reflection and clarification of feelings, and information-giving). Whatever the style, talk was the most frequent response by all the teachers.

Several strategies, nevertheless, were distinctive: teachers in the play-oriented board used non-intervention significantly more than did the others, while teachers in the traditional boards used spatial arrangements (usually seating plans) more often. More importantly, the more open teachers did not use behaviour modification procedures, while the traditional teachers did.

One strategy that became evident only late in the year was retention, usually for academic reasons. Children in the open approach rarely repeat a year; their school programs are considered able to accommodate a broad spectrum of abilities. In the traditional boards, several children were retained so that they would experience success the following year.

Thus, although all the problems cited arose in all the boards, their descriptions and resolutions varied considerably, with quite different outcomes for the children. In fact, in the more open boards, the teachers preferred the terms "concerns" or "situations", indicating that most difficulties were not regarded as very serious and that they tried to view children not as problems but as pupils with unmet needs.

The wide range of teacher styles provided us the opportunity to observe problems common to all primary teachers and to try out different solutions. In all cases, we sought methods that were positive and encouraging and that could be applied by any teacher. The descriptions in the following chapters, then, are the outcomes of extended practice by experienced teachers.

CHAPTER 2: DEALING WITH CLASSROOM PROBLEMS

In this section, the problems cited by the teachers are reviewed, as are the strategies chosen as likely solutions. Some unsuccessful strategies are included if they are illustrative of the nature of the problem or situation described.

We expected that strategies would be selected according to the nature of the problem and/or the individual characteristics of the child involved. Both these factors were influential. In addition, the teachers' and boards' philosophies were strongly influential. Each problem elicited several kinds of strategies, and most strategies were applied to many and diverse problems. Moreover, many children, often with multiple problems, were handled with several strategies simultaneously. It was, therefore, not always possible to determine which of a cluster of strategies was the effective one, or whether or not the cluster itself was essential. However, if several teachers successfully applied similar strategies to a given concern, we considered those strategies effective for that situation.

When asked to describe their concerns, the teachers responded in their own words. Thus, terms such as "lacks control" or "needs self-discipline" might be used to describe quite similar--or dissimilar--problems (e.g., both these terms were used for disruptive behaviour, inattention, and failure to follow routines). We therefore clarified the terms with the teachers before sorting them into six groups with twenty subcategories, each denoting a problem (see table 1 in the Appendix).

Because of the method used, there is some overlap among the problem definitions. For example, although "peer passive" and "lacks self-confidence" were viewed by most of the teachers as distinct problems to which they applied different strategies, the boundaries were not clear. Therefore, many of the strategies applied to one were extended and found equally useful for both. Similarly, the strategies for reducing disruptive behaviour were tried out and shown to be effective for improving self-direction as well as social skills. The reader will perhaps wish to experiment further, inventing new strategies for these problems and implementing our strategies in different situations.

Problems 1, 2, 3: Health Problems, Language and Speech Difficulties, Motor Difficulties

Health problems serious enough to concern teachers occurred in nineteen pupils. These included heart defects, haemophilia, temporary hearing loss, chronic fatigue, and frequent colds causing absence.

The serious illnesses were usually being monitored by parents and physicians, although two cases of prolonged ear infection were diagnosed as a result of teachers' suggestions that medical attention was needed. Contact with parents and/or referral services was maintained in these cases.

Twenty-five children were identified as having language or speech problems sufficient to cause difficulties with social or academic development. In most cases, the teachers requested referrals for remediation or English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction, usually after consulting the child's parents. However, if the poor language development was viewed as resulting from general immaturity, health problems, or lack of experience, increased teacher attention and enriched programming were provided, chiefly within the classroom.

All nine children with perceptual or motor development problems were named for at least one additional problem. For some, handwriting was difficult and hence academic work or adherence to routines (e.g., completing work on time) was a problem. The motor problems of three children (involving gait and posture) were considered severe enough to interfere with the children's self-concept and social development.

Strategies for Health Problems

1. Maintain frequent contact with parents. If you suspect an untreated problem, contact the public health nurse.
2. Use individual contracts for learning tasks so that children may progress in spite of absences.
3. Modify expectations or performance standards, but ensure that the child has worthwhile work to accomplish.
4. A child may suffer a temporary hearing loss after a cold or sore throat, and apparent inattention or aloofness may result. Also, sometimes hearing loss occurs only at certain pitch levels, and the child may miss your instructions although hearing other sounds.

Seat the child close by, near another child who is good at following directions and can coach him/her.

5. Combat the physical lethargy of an obese child with short, frequent health hustles that require movement.

6. Be alert for changes in temperament, work habits, or attention span that may be caused by illness or allergy (e.g., one girl was unable to write or concentrate after eating corn chips). Contact the parents or public health nurse.

Strategies for Language Problems

1. Refer the child for special help if the problem is severe enough to inhibit expression or intelligibility.

2. Create situations which require talk with peers, since co-operative activities require consultation and extend the language functions employed.

3. In an ESL situation, seat the new child near one who is friendly and helpful. Similarly, seat the uncommunicative child near one who is pleasant but not overwhelming. Allow chatting at work-time.

4. Have an aide, volunteer, or peer tutor available to work with individuals. Story-reading, writing, and play activities all contribute to language enrichment.

5. Use a phono-visual program, which assists awareness of speech sounds, or a Language Master.

Strategies for Motor Problems

1. If the problem is severe, refer the child for special help.

2. Use volunteers to help with exercises, such as walking up and down stairs or along a string.

3. Use physical games such as Shadows which can help increase body awareness. Montessori or similar type apparatus develops small-muscle control.

4. If children develop an odd habit or twitch, explain quietly and privately how they appear, and arrange a cue to let them know when they are doing it.

5. Minor motor difficulties may make handwriting difficult, requiring much of the child's attention. Allow a messy first draft when the child is composing or thinking about content. Attend to neatness in the final copy.

6. Since some children may write better at the chalkboard or using markers and large paper on the floor, allow them to do so.

7. Most creative activities have beneficial outcomes for hand-eye co-ordination. Provide a daily activity period.

Problem 4: Immaturity

Immaturity was identified when a child lagged behind classmates in general development. Typically, the immature child showed poor language and social abilities, a short concentration span, and a lack of ordinary knowledge. Several also lagged in motor skills. Their academic readiness was thus seriously impaired by poor development in the foundation areas.

Immaturity arose from different sources. One cause seemed to be a lack of stimulation in the home. These children, often the youngest, were babied or overprotected, and given little opportunity for initiative or exploration. Several children had had lengthy illnesses, during which their learning experiences had been limited; they had to make up for lost time. Some showed signs of learning disabilities, perhaps associated with inadequate stimulation, perhaps congenital.

The teachers speculated whether lags were the result of innate or environmental factors. The question was moot, however, since they believed that environmentally caused lags could be corrected by careful programming with some remedial help and that innate problems would require special education. In practice, though, the teachers' responses were less affected by etiologies than by their overall approach and their impression of the individual child.

A few children not originally named as problems were found to regress in their behaviour and sometimes in their work. Crying, tantrums, listlessness, and inattention were noted. The teachers suggested that health, allergies, or family problems were likely causes. Most consulted with parents in these cases, and tried to provide attention without much pressure. Although they worried about these children and viewed them as delicate, they regarded the setbacks as temporary and short-term in effect.

Strategies for Immaturity

1. Watch and support; provide a stimulating environment with many play activities to encourage social interaction.
2. Treat aggression, crying, and tantrums gently but firmly, taking the child to a quiet corner.
3. Build self-confidence and responsibility through classroom jobs and errands (e.g., one child whom the teacher judged to be lacking experience and responsibility at home was required "to do things no one else requires of him"). At first, these jobs may be carried out with a partner.
4. Provide much stimulation and attention on a one-to-one basis. Read stories, discuss creative work, provide structured and semi-structured materials (e.g., Montessori-type materials).
5. Immature children are often spoiled and babied by their classmates. Have a group discussion to help remedy this situation so that the peer group can assist in the other's social learning.
6. If motor or language problems are severe, move to a special placement. Provide help for academic difficulties.
7. If immaturity is the chief problem and the child cannot fit in with peers, consider retention or a split-grade placement, or move to a more open setting.

Problem 5: Active Negative Behaviour Towards Adults

Only nine children were considered to be rude or defiant towards adults. Two of these were children who also exhibited violently aggressive behaviour towards peers. None of the other cases was viewed as being very serious, although in only one case was this the sole problem. On the whole, rudeness was treated as acting out behaviour indicative of unhappiness, uncertainty, or poor self-control. Teachers therefore responded to the accompanying problems as much as to the rudeness itself. Parental conferences, behaviour modification (one case), increased personal contact, and positive interactions were successful solutions. As one teacher noted, "I have to spend time with him every day or he's saucy, but if I do he's fine."

Strategies for Rude or Defiant Behaviour

1. Provide much positive attention without criticism, but remember "praise must be earned by performance". Do not give in to the impulse to treat the child with equal rudeness; you set the standard of behaviour.
2. Maintain friendly but firm direction. Do not attend to the child's demands, but do respond to requests.

Problem 6: Distrust or Passivity Towards Adults

The distrustful children tended to avoid interaction with the teacher or other adults, and to be subdued or reluctant when such interaction occurred. Some appeared simply shy, while others seemed to be deliberately non-compliant. With the shy children, the teachers provided encouragement and positive contact but not much extra attention. Generally, the approach was to "be positive but not pushy; they need time".

The passive resistance children produced quite different reactions, arousing strong feelings of personal affront and indignation in their teachers. These were children who failed to obey instructions or routines, come when called, or attend when the teacher required attention. They were described as "dazed" or "out of it". The common adult response was talk, usually sharp reminders. One teacher tried nagging when behavioural techniques had failed. Eventually, she decided to "ignore him; my time is too important to bother". (It should be noted here that the reinforcement technique adopted had not been clearly understood

by the child, but the teacher did not wish to explain again, saying, "He knows what's expected, and doesn't deserve special treatment.")

This case is illustrative of the feelings resistors elicited: anger and a need to defend teacher authority. Observation showed, however, that not one child was disobedient on purpose, and therefore the resort to authority was a misplaced response. In each case, the child lacked social skills essential in the classroom: knowing when to pay attention, being aware of cues from others' behaviour, and falling into the rhythm of the class. The children were not resistive at all, but rather unconscious of routines and transitions in the interaction. They really were "out of it".

Once this situation was understood, the teacher found it not too difficult to deal with the problem. Individual instruction in routines (such as "walking her through the centres" or "having her repeat back the instructions") was effective. Hand signals to catch attention sometimes worked, but not for children who seldom looked up; they required a verbal cue. More important was acceptance of the child and the situation. Amanda's case is instructive. Amanda was a flitter, wandering around, ignoring group activities and interaction. Her teacher, annoyed, remonstrated to no effect. After some discussion, the teacher realized she felt threatened by Amanda's apparent refusal to obey and was responding as though her authority was in question. This was a rather shocking insight to a basically non-authoritarian teacher, but it led her to resolve to communicate her feelings directly ("Amanda, I'm upset ..."), explaining just what she expected. Thereafter, she was able to "stop minding so much", to let another child keep an eye on Amanda, and to give her much attention and praise, while also avoiding criticism. By the end of the year, the problem had faded completely and Amanda was part of the group.

Strategies for Distrust of Adults

1. Be positive and encouraging, without insistence or excessive heartiness, which can appear threatening to a quiet child.
2. Provide frequent attention other than talk: eye contact, smiles, approaching or sitting nearby. Avoid harsh speaking tones.
3. Provide a safe, stable environment with clear expectations. Ensure that the child knows how to work and behave so that he/she will not have to worry about displeasing you.
4. Consider reasons why the child avoids contact. It may be part of a general pattern of poor social skills, lack of self-confidence, distrust of adults or authority figures, shyness, or depression. If any of these is indicated, use appropriate strategies.

Strategies for Passive Resistance

1. Try not to feel insulted or abused. Since the child's lack of response is probably not the result of deliberate rudeness or animosity, your impulse to punish or exert authority is therefore inappropriate. If the child is indeed hostile or defiant, such measures are likely to confirm his/her feelings, while positive interactions may eventually overcome them.

2. Realize that some people always need reminders (said one teacher, "I hope she'll have a good secretary!").

3. Pass the problem. Let other children pass on instructions or reminders when needed. This procedure permits the passive child to receive support from peers, and also permits them to give it.

4. Establish clear signals for giving and getting attention. Often, the child who appears to be ignoring you does not know when to attend or how to catch your eye (e.g., one child tried several times over an hour to get the teacher's attention, but always put his hand up just after the teacher had looked his way and she never noticed).

5. Use reinforcement techniques to establish routines (e.g., having called the child by name when the group is summoned, say, "I'm pleased that you came right away when I called you"). Be sure to set the conditions so that the desired behaviour will occur and be rewarded. This approach has the advantage of helping the teacher and child to see each other positively.

Problem 7: Disruptive Behaviour

Disruptive behaviours, the well-known discipline problems, are of concern to teachers for many reasons. One is their own self-image as teacher. The importance of managerial and control skills is stressed from the beginning of a teacher's professional education; they are a major part of teacher evaluation at all levels. It is not surprising, therefore, that some teachers view disruptive behaviour as a threat to their authority and even to their professional reputation. Other teachers interpret it as a sign of failure to reconcile the children with the teachers' educational values and objectives. Discussion of such feelings in some of the teacher meetings helped both to clarify teacher responses to disruptive behaviours and to analyse the behaviours more carefully.

Disruptive activities are those which interfere with or distract from the work or play of other pupils and include many behaviours that are not in themselves undesirable. For example, several children were described as "rowdy when together" or "really having a good time". Some were "unable to resist poking each other". In such cases, the usual response was to seat them apart, often with one party alone or near the teacher. Their behaviour was regarded as "inappropriate for the classroom", rather than as serious in itself, but in most cases was not permitted to continue.

Although not all the teachers cited disruptive behaviour as a problem, all were observed to deal with it in their classroom. Most either ignored occasional misbehaviours or issued mild reprimands, but counted such events as normal in a classroom. Usually, they expressed concern only if particular children persistently disturbed them or distracted other pupils at work time. In other words, it was patterns of disruptive behaviour that worried the teachers.

Initially, several of the behaviour problems were described in words such as "need for self-control" or "lack of self-discipline", terms centred on the child's failure to meet behavioural expectations. The first strategies proposed, therefore, were usually directed towards the individual child and focused on the misconduct. Several involved direct talk approaches such as "talk about control and self-control", "clarify expectations", or "remind about rules". These strategies rest on the assumption that children agree that they ought to behave well, can do so, and will if they know how. The frequent success of these strategies suggests that this assumption is often right.

However, in some more persistent cases, a more useful strategy was to treat a disruptive child as "one who can't rather than one who won't". Since this removed the behaviour from the realm of the power struggle, the teachers ceased to feel defensive and could become more objective. They could then regard the misconduct in new ways, often as symptoms of other concerns.

It became evident, upon observation, that disruptive behaviour was often a means of getting attention. Since the teachers considered attention to be a strong need which could and should be met in the classroom, they adopted many tactics to provide it, ranging from "positive attention and affection every day because without it he's a trouble-maker" to "frequent eye contact to maintain control". Several of the children were also viewed as having an inadequate self-concept and hence needed attention as well as other measures to bolster their self-esteem.

Some of the children did not participate usefully in large-group activities such as story-time or discussions. Most of the teachers sent disturbers back to their desks, but for some children this became a routine rather than a deterrent. Providing alternatives to large-group activities was more effective for these children, particularly when the teacher

also provided time for individual coaching or reading. Often, given something quiet to do, the child also appeared to be attending to the group.

Parents were contacted in a few cases, usually when there were other problems involved. Sometimes, parents and teacher agreed on some strategy to assist the child, such as a daily report or reinforcement to be followed up at home. Often, these measures were initiated by the parents, particularly when they had to deal with the same problems at home.

In a number of children, disruptive behaviour was associated with poor social skills. Since the teacher's initial response to misbehaviour was often to move the children away from the sources of stimulus (usually children whose proximity elicited misconduct), several were sitting alone, away from other children. This approach did effectively reduce misbehaviour, but did not help to improve social abilities. Some children were acting out personal unhappiness or were simply impulsive and undirected. Their teachers therefore designed strategies to alleviate these underlying problems.

Finally, classroom observations showed that some disruptive behaviour was related to the organizational structure of the classroom. For example, in one classroom, children were observed waiting in line for long periods to have their work marked. Impatient children sometimes grew unruly and were frequently told to be quiet and practice self-control. However, after the observers pointed out that the disruptions seldom occurred within the first five minutes of waiting, the teacher modified her routine to reduce waiting and thus eliminated both the disruptive behaviours and their immediate cause.

In some cases, the teachers helped disruptive children to channel their energy more usefully, in tutoring or helping friends rather than distracting them from their work. Several children were observed to become disruptive when they could not understand or carry out their assignments; giving them more suitable work or providing an aide or tutor to help them was often successful both in reducing disruptive behaviour and in increasing academic interest and success. Similarly, many children were observed to become disorderly when they had completed their work; revising work schedules or providing interesting activities overcame this difficulty.

Strategies for Disruptive Behaviour

In General

1. Talk directly and clearly about your expectations, and encourage the children to verbalize them in their own way.

2. Explain class rules, and remind children when needed.

Attention-Seeking

3. Provide much attention at other times, and try to ignore or play down the disruptions.

4. Provide positive attention by praising work and social behaviours. Touching and hugs are welcomed by most children, but do not force them. Pleasant notes get read and kept.

5. Read to the class or other children, help them with work, or supervise a play activity. These activities can provide the disruptive child with both responsibility and needed attention.

6. Use special codes or signals to provide attention as well as a private reminder when a child is stretching the limits of what is tolerable (e.g., "When I touch my ear and blink, you'll know what I mean").

Poor Social Skills

7. Separate the disruptive child from those who elicit the misbehaviour. Seat him/her near children who can help him/her acquire self-discipline (e.g., one very disruptive girl improved noticeably when seated "between two very kind boys she couldn't control"). Try not to isolate a child for long periods: isolation may control behaviour, but does not contribute to social skills.

8. If a child is acting out because of isolation, help him/her join in play or activities with other children. Put him/her near children who are tolerant and friendly.

9. Initiate co-operative activities (e.g., window-cleaning) and games (e.g., Mirrors or Shadows) that can help develop social skills. But choose the partners carefully.

10. Use class discussion to help children understand the impact of their behaviour on others, and to establish rules for conduct.

Low Self-Esteem

11. Help the other children to view the disruptive child positively and to accept him/her in their activities.

12. Help the child to express his/her feelings in words and creative work rather than through misconduct.

13. If a disruptive child has other problems such as health, motor, or academic difficulties, attend to them.

Academic Work

14. Use a computer or self-chosen activities to provide more stimulating alternatives to misbehaviour.

15. Provide work that the child can do with some effort. Work that is too hard or too easy does not stimulate concentration.

16. Provide alternatives to group activities (e.g., "I'm going to read a story now; you may join us or paint or write a story, as long as you're quiet").

17. Use structured work-jobs to help children get organized and settled into work.

18. Downplay competition and heroics. Help the children to focus on the task, not on who finishes first.

19. Use a volunteer to provide both help and attention.

Lack of Control

20. Encourage the child to think before acting. Describing the planned behaviour can help to control impulses (e.g., "Just tell yourself out loud what you're going to do ...").

21. Use logical consequences to help connect behaviour with outcomes and encourage self-direction.

22. If a relapse occurs, avoid blame. Help the child to verbalize what went wrong and what might work better next time.

General Unhappiness

23. Contact the parents (e.g., Carrie was upset by her mother's new job; when the teacher called, the mother decided to set aside a "special time" just for Carrie and the teacher did the same at school).

Problem 8: Aggressive Behaviour

Aggressive behaviour (hitting, bullying, fighting) did not occur very frequently in the study, but, when it did, it aroused serious concern in the teachers. Generally it was regarded as symptomatic of other conditions, such as low self-image, poor social skills, or immaturity. This view was supported by several of the cases being Kindergarten children, most of whose aggression declined as they adapted to the school program with its emphasis on social routines and activities.

Moreover, most problems of aggression faded after the first few weeks of school although playground outbursts remained frequent at certain schools. In these schools, there was no general policy on playground behaviour--one teacher, not in the study, actually said, "I don't care what they do, as long as they don't do it my classroom". Our primary teachers, however, were worried about playground behaviour, both on account of the children's safety and because they were concerned with inculcating peaceful, co-operative behaviour. Although many good intentions were expressed, no strategies were carried out to overcome this problem.

In the classroom, aggressive behaviour was never ignored. Whatever its cause, it was always stopped, usually with a firm statement of the no-hitting rule, and often with a further reprimand or consequence. The policy was clear: aggression is taboo in the primary classroom and will not be countenanced for any reason.

It was therefore extremely disturbing to some teachers to be faced not just with minor problems of childish conflict, but with genuinely hostile and violently aggressive children. Fortunately rare, these cases had serious consequences for their classes. Three of the five such children were continually involved in fights, even in the presence of their teacher and often for no apparent reason. All showed signs of extreme frustration leading to outbursts of temper, but were unable or unwilling to try "cool-out" methods to help themselves avoid trouble. One in particular seemed determined to damage others--when behaviour modification was prescribed to curb his aggressive acts, he grew sly and found other ways of hurting people.

Of the many strategies tried, none was successful in changing these children. At the end of the year, one child was referred for medical examination; her behaviour changed suddenly and dramatically with medication. The others were referred for testing by the board psychological services, and alternative programs were suggested for them. Neither the teachers, the observers, nor the diagnostic specialists felt that these children could be best served by their retention in a regular classroom setting; they needed very special help, and their classmates needed protection.

A more typical example of aggressive behaviour was provided by Harold, a Grade 2 child. His teacher described him as having "a chip on his shoulder", high-strung, and unsure of himself. When observed, Harold was frequently surly and aggressive, seldom playing with his classmates but frequently lashing out at them. His teacher felt that such a child needed "special attention" and firmness "based on love--showing love, helping when they get upset". She devised an ongoing theme of "friendship", with much discussion, group work, and creative artwork centred around social behaviours and feelings, encouraging the children to become mutually supportive, and helping Harold to become part of the group. She also gave Harold the role of the Wolf in the play of Red Riding Hood, and strongly promoted his various creative efforts. Putting Harold in charge of some group projects (writing and directing the next play) and giving him more difficult tasks ("things he can be proud of") helped to develop his self-esteem and overcome his need for aggressive behaviour. Harold remained quick-tempered, but gained enough self-control to avoid hitting out even when angry.

Strategies for Aggressive Behaviour

1. Explain conduct rules firmly, but impersonally (e.g., "Hitting is not allowed").

2. Since young children may hit to get what they want, teach alternative methods: negotiating (e.g., "Make a deal"), taking turns, or sharing if appropriate (e.g., "Is that something you could both do together?").

3. Give time to work out conflicts (e.g., "Please go in the corner and solve your problem"). You need not become involved in children's disputes but the children do need them resolved.

4. Let children use such items as modelling clay and nerf balls that can be thrown without damage to absorb aggressive feelings.

5. Provide a "cool-out corner" or "thinking chair" where children can calm down. Let using it be the child's own decision (e.g., "You can go there when you've got to be alone").

6. Talk with the class on how to deal with anger and how to help the angry child.

7. Talk about what is worth fighting for, and when it is better to walk away. Explain that the latter technique also takes the wind out of an opponent's sails.

8. Use punishment, but only if it works the first time. Repeated punishment often arouses resentment and a desire for revenge, thereby increasing aggression and lessening the possibility of change. (For example, a boy who bullied the younger children was warned that "the next time, you'll see how it feels". At the next occurrence, he was spanked by the vice-principal, and the bullying stopped.)

The strategies for disruptive behaviour (Problem 7) can also be applied to aggressive behaviour.

The violently aggressive child usually needs a special environment and care. However, until they are provided, the other children may need help in coping with the aggressor's presence.

Strategies for Living with the Aggressive Child

1. Discuss the children's feelings, and how they can get along with the aggressive child. (For example, Ronnie's classmates said they wanted him to stay in their class, but "if he's going to hit people, he should stay home". When the teacher explained that this was not permitted, the children decided that, when Ronnie could not control his temper, they wanted him to leave the room. But they would try hard to "cheer him up and not get him mad", and "not hit back even if they felt like it". Their decisions were put into practice; they tried hard with Ronnie, but he was taken to the office when out of control.)

2. Discuss with children the impact of their inciting or irritating the aggressive child. Teach them how to withdraw without losing face (e.g., "Peace and quiet are more important than a fight you can't win").

Problem 9: Bossy or Meddlesome Behaviour

Bossy or meddlesome behaviour is akin to aggression, but does not involve physical force. It is, however, an attempt to exercise power or dominate, and arouses feelings of annoyance and exasperation--and sometimes dependence--in the victims. Often it takes the form of

uninvited advice or direction (e.g., "You're not supposed to do it that way--here, let me"). Bossy children are often capable but impatient, unwilling to tolerate slowness or ineptitude in others, and insistent that their own ideas be followed. More importantly, they lack the social skill to recognize how they appear to others or to know when helping become imposing.

Strategies for Bossy or Meddlesome Behaviour

1. Seat the bossy child near children who cannot be controlled by him/her.

2. Use group discussion (e.g., "What can we do about the situation?"). Let children see that they do not need to permit others to dominate them. Consider how they can deal with interference or unwanted advice. This approach encourages all the children to become behaviour shapers, and provides needed social clues for the bossy ones.

3. Provide much contact and positive reinforcement; the bossy child is often in need of attention and reassurance.

4. Channel leadership abilities usefully. Make the child responsible for a centre or project, or allow him/her to tutor a younger child or classmate with the person tutored in charge.

Problems ID, II: Leading and Following Peers Inappropriately

Although only five children were named as leading peers into inappropriate behaviour, most of the teachers agreed that, when the problem occurs, it can be serious, especially when several followers are involved. In one class, a charismatic, cheerfully undisciplined child undermined his teacher's management techniques to the point where she felt her authority shattered. The child, for his part, was learning very little, since much of his time was devoted to getting attention from his peers. Moved to another class, he settled down and worked satisfactorily, while his former teacher quickly came to enjoy her class and turn her attention to other pupils who needed her.

All the teachers found it essential to deal effectively with instigators, often by separating them from their disciples.

An initial expectation was that, when the ringleaders were removed, the followers would find another model on whom to depend. However, of the nine children pegged as followers, only one did so, and his dependence showed much less than previously. It appeared, therefore, that inappropriate following requires a leader who is more than ordinarily attractive, rather than followers who are excessively dependent.

Strategies for Leading and Following Inappropriately

1. Separate the leader from the followers, emphasizing conduct rules and expectations.

2. Group dependent children with more responsible models, and encourage independent activities.

3. Take advantage of peer groups to develop desirable social and academic behaviour (e.g., "Why don't you guys see if you can ..."). Channel the leader's energies.

4. Do not cause the leader to lose face or permit yourself to become involved in a power struggle which may escalate into open conflict.

Problem 12: Peer Passive: The Shy or Withdrawn Child

Peer passive children appeared "alone or apart from other children", lacking in social skills or the ability to relate to others. The teachers described them as shy, withdrawn, passive, and "grey".

Not all solitary behaviour is undesirable, and the teachers were concerned only if they felt that lack of interaction would impede a child's learning or social development. They did not try to change a private person or one who was "basically a loner, not a group person" into a gregarious child, but they did wish to see that all their pupils could relax and interact with their classmates. To this end, they developed strategies congruent with the apparent sources of the withdrawn behaviour: immaturity, unsureness in a new situation, lack of social skills (not knowing how to play with others or to join a group), anxiety, or timidity.

Withdrawn behaviour occurred most frequently in Kindergarten, less often in Grade 1, and seldom in Grade 2. This finding may indicate that peer passivity is a developmental trait associated with the early school years. This would support the maturationist view that, if an adequate and inviting learning environment is provided, no special programs or strategies are needed in Kindergarten to help develop social skills.

The Kindergarten teachers in the play-oriented board maintained this position. They felt that children in their classes playing alone were at a developmental stage requiring solitary play, and considered attempts to enforce shared activities unsuitable. The style and content of play in these classes were entirely up to the children, and group sessions were confined to brief meetings and snacktime.

The other Kindergarten teachers were less sanguine, considering social skills as the outcomes of learning as well as of maturation. They therefore emphasized communicative abilities, along with participation in groups, sharing tasks, forming friendships, and acquiring sufficient knowledge of manners and conventions to feel at ease in school. They also felt that Kindergarten was an appropriate setting for such learnings, since they could be accomplished without the added pressure of academic expectations. Their programs, therefore, actively encouraged social interaction both in large groups and at play centres, and special efforts were made to involve loners in social activities or play with other children.

Although they were concerned with the solitary child, these teachers agreed that socializing was partly a matter of maturation, and often used a watch-and-wait strategy or enriched the Kindergarten program to foster social development. (The Grade 1 and 2 teachers, however, usually chose more individual and active strategies with this problem, perhaps because they expected children to have developed socially, and considered obvious isolation or non-participation to be a more serious problem for their pupils.)

At the end of the year, interviews showed that the children in the maturationist Kindergartens were less aware of their classmates as individuals, and showed less sense of group identity than their peers in the other Kindergartens. This finding suggests some differences in social learnings. However, the fact that the Grade 2 children in this board were not very different from their peers may not have been due to maturation, but to the practices of the Grade 1 teachers, both of whom were very careful to promote social interactions among their pupils and to help them get to know one another. Perhaps, then, by Grade 2 their pupils had had social skills training similar to that of their age-mates in the other boards. It is also possible that Grade 2 teachers would consider isolation a problem only when it was very evident or severe, as in the case of a new pupil or one who was actively rejected by his/her peers. Since only one Grade 2 teacher actually required children to work co-operatively, solitary activity could seldom be viewed as a problem--indeed, in the more traditional classrooms, it was the norm for all academic activities apart from teacher-led groups.

Strategies for Shy, Withdrawn Behaviour

1. Watch and wait. Many children need time to adjust to a new class and teacher; by November they are likely to feel secure enough to socialize more. In Kindergarten, the process may take longer. (For example, several children, hesitant and painfully shy, made little progress until Christmas, but blossomed after the holidays.)

2. Avoid pressure to interact, but encourage and praise participation.

3. Continually invite participation, even if there is no response. (For example, one child, silent for months, at last responded to the daily invitation to bring something for show-and-tell. In January she quietly sidled up to the teacher holding her new doll, and the teacher immediately helped her to show it to a small group playing nearby. A month later, she told the teacher she wished to use the sand table--her first verbal initiation and first time at the table. By March, she was "a different child", smiling, showing her toys from home, assisting visitors, enjoying quiet play with her friends.)

4. Exploit opportunities for communication. (For example, Ginny wrote in her story book, "We have rabbits". The teacher asked her to bring one to school, where it created a sensation and opened the gates to many friendly exchanges and shared experiences for Ginny and others.)

5. In kindergarten, snacktime can provide an opportunity for pleasant conversation and socializing. Have an aide or volunteer sit and chat with four or five children at a time, until all have had their turn.

6. Co-operative games and activities can encourage interaction. Ensure that the shy child is working with others who are not aggressive or overwhelming.

7. Join in activities if your presence will ease the situation. (For example, when another child approached the sand table, James burst into tears and left. The teacher gently brought him back and sifted sand beside him until he could tolerate the other child's presence.)

8. Use puppets or drama to provide shy children with a means to communicate. It may be easier for them when they are "someone else".

9. Let the shy child demonstrate a skill on a one-to-one basis (e.g., "Could you help Sharon with that?").

10. If a very bright child has no one to share interests with, a mixed-grade math or computer group may help to provide shared experiences.

11. Allow children lacking in social skills to interact with, and learn from, younger children whose skills are more on their level.

12. Contact the parents if you suspect the withdrawn behaviour results from an upset or unhappy situation outside school. (For instance, Lori was upset by her babysitter; the teacher felt Lori's self-esteem was being damaged. After discussion with the teacher, Lori's parents arranged for her to go home with a friend after school, and Lori's mood shifted dramatically. In another case, Lloyd was afraid of the noisy crowds on the bus. His teacher found him a "buddy" for the bus ride, who also became his friend in class. With this beginning, he was able to develop further social relationships at school.)

III. Emotions

Problem 13: Unhappiness

Although all the teachers in Project Thrive felt that school should be a place where children are happy and involved, they usually regarded unhappiness as a problem only if it appeared to

be hindering a child's learning or participation in classroom activities. In the twenty-four cases cited, usually some overt indications such as crying, moping, or complaining were present; otherwise, such children were more likely to be considered as passive or withdrawn (Problem 12) or lacking in self-confidence (Problem 14). These categories co-occurred about half the time with Problem 13.

The teachers' most frequent strategy was to contact the parent to try to solve the problem co-operatively. This would sometimes involve asking a parent to reduce pressure for academic success, but, more often, to help determine the source of the problem. In one case, the teacher reported that "her mother's just the same"; in another, that the parents "fought all through the interview: no wonder the kid's unhappy".

Teachers also used group discussions, role-playing and illustrative stories, and private conversations to help children focus on and clarify feelings and develop their own strategies. Teachers also gave increased or more positive attention. In a few cases, they made referrals for accompanying or suspected problems that might affect mood or disposition (e.g., speech or health problems: one child who became despondent turned out to be severely anaemic). One teacher tried behaviour modification techniques ("a smiling face for a good day") to encourage a cheerful attitude, but without obvious effects on the child's mood. This outcome was not very surprising, since being happy is not a well-defined, reinforceable behaviour.

Strategies for Unhappiness

1. Deal with the source of unhappiness. (For example, several kindergarten children were disappointed that they were not learning to read. Some were under pressure from home to demonstrate academic skills. The teacher spoke with the parents about the program, but also provided some print-oriented activities that the children could do and take home.)

2. For unhappiness caused by social isolation or rejection, help the child to make friends and participate in play. Seat the child near others who are pleasant, or encourage after-school visiting.

3. Provide reassurance if needed. (For example, Judy complained at home that she was failing in her schoolwork. The teacher promised to phone her mother if there were any real problems at school. If she "didn't call, there was nothing serious enough to worry about". The mother was to reassure Judy so that she would not get too worked up, but to "be a little tough" when she cried or whined.)

Problem 14: Self-Confidence

All the teachers viewed a healthy self-concept as a most important educational objective, essential to both general and academic development. In one board, the play-based activity program was viewed as a supportive, failure-proof opportunity for both social and intellectual growth, and it was felt that this, along with avoidance of any harsh criticism, should be the chief method of building self-confidence. The teachers viewed their approach as preventive rather than curative. Similarly, all the Kindergarten teachers and the other teachers of open programs intended their instructional approach to encourage self-confidence as well as skills and frequently mentioned this objective as a reason for using activity-based learning.

Lack of self-confidence was viewed as a problem only when it appeared to interfere with children's academic or social learning or to be a cause of misconduct. Teacher descriptions included phrases such as low self-concept; frightened of new situations or activities; requires much attention; needs reassurance; anxious, tense, insecure, defensive; nervous, upset by mistakes; easily discouraged; acts helpless; does not expect to succeed; and passive subdued unfocused self-image.

Most of the descriptions suggested a hesitant or passive, non-assertive personal style. This suggestion was borne out by this problem being most often paired with Problem 12 (peer passive) and by the descriptions of the two being quite similar. In thirteen children, however, lack of self-confidence was seen as causing aggressive, disruptive, or boastful behaviours, especially where these were viewed as attention-getting devices.

It is hard to determine the extent to which self-confidence is in the eye of the beholder. Although all the teachers considered it a necessary prerequisite to learning, their descriptions suggest that they were, in fact, looking at quite different traits, for example, self-esteem, self-direction, risk-taking, and social skills. Moreover, low self-confidence was usually cited along with at least one other problem (in 65 of 86 cases), often with the suggestion that it was a likely cause of that problem. Only when cited along with health, language, or motor difficulties was low self-confidence viewed as the outcome of a problem situation that must be remedied before self-confidence could be acquired.

For most children, then, the teachers' aim was to "help them feel good about themselves". Since teachers felt that their esteem exerted a strong influence on pupil self-esteem, most tried to express positive regard, hoping that a resultant increase in self-worth would also have beneficial effects in other areas.

Eight children were initially identified as low in both self-confidence and academic achievement. In only one case was the teacher's first strategy to "give him work that he can do", along with the more usual strategies of "more attention", "more positive interaction", or "talk" from the teacher. In general, the lack of academic progress was viewed as a result, not a cause, of low self-confidence. However, in the course of our observations, we saw that several of these children were baffled and bewildered by the tasks set for them. Teacher attention and encouragement were not adequate to promote self-confidence in the children; they needed work they could understand and accomplish successfully. Moreover, giving them traditional classroom jobs like blackboard cleaning or pencil-sharpening made no contribution to their self-image as students. In other words, for the children to acquire a sense of competence, they had to become competent, and to prove it to themselves and others through genuine academic achievement.

Nearly every strategy was tried with these children (only out-of-room activities were not attempted). The particular strategy chosen by a teacher was related to his/her overall view of the child. For example, several children were given a non-intervention approach or "time in the Kindergarten program", since their teachers believed that their problems were caused by slow adaptation or development. Parents were contacted in cases where the teachers felt that the children needed more encouragement, less pressure, or specific tasks that would help to establish a sense of accomplishment. Positive interaction, increased teacher attention, and one-to-one talk together accounted for over a third of the strategies used for Problem 14.

Several teachers changed the name by which they called certain children, feeling that a new name would help foster a new image. Most often, they adopted correct forms rather than childish pet names or nicknames. Thus, "Jamie" became James, "Chuck" Charles, etc. One girl, whose name had been mispronounced all along, responded particularly well when the teacher learned to say it right, while another who had avoided her ethnic name was encouraged to "be proud of who she is".

Teachers also used program organization to help children develop self-confidence. Special jobs, assignments, or materials were provided so that pupils "could feel their achievement". Some children were permitted to work at home or at recess so that they would not have to worry about finishing on time. Stories, discussions, and role-playing about feelings and relationships (e.g., jealousy of a sibling) helped to clarify feelings for some children, as did direct talk from the teacher.

Several teachers used individual or small-group tutoring as a way of giving extra attention, promoting skills, and reducing the pressure of large-group participation. One teacher spent every noon hour reading to three children who, she felt, did not receive adequate attention at home.

Several children were placed in reading groups slightly above their level in order to enhance their self-esteem and the esteem of their classmates, or to provide a challenge to be met. Three others were placed in lower groups "so they wouldn't have too much to do". (We asked the teachers in these cases whether the children could not remain with the higher group and have briefer assignments. They could not, "because the workbook went with the reader".)

On the whole, it was evident that the teachers were trying to accommodate individual differences by adjusting their demands on the children they perceived as low in self-confidence. In general, however, organizational changes were minor, not likely to affect the overall program or the environment of the whole class. An exception was the Grade 1 in which a "school centre" was established to provide a secure and structured environment in an open setting; the centre remained available to the class for the rest of the year. Other exceptions were the Kindergarten class play carefully orchestrated by the teacher to involve the children in ways that would increase their self-esteem and the social skills needed for self-confidence, and a Grade 2 in which plays were used to focus awareness of social skills and roles.

Strategies for Self-Confidence

In General

1. Try benign neglect. Leave the child time to watch others until confidence is sufficient to try new experiences. Invite but do not require participation. Some children learn a great deal through observation, even though they may not appear to do anything for a long time.

2. Provide activities that can be completed successfully (e.g., have a sheet of simple mathematics or language activities for the child who is feeling discouraged). These activities also serve as a review of old learnings, and may ease the child towards new work.

3. Give encouragement and praise for whatever is accomplished. A fine story, show-and-tell presentation, or drawing is worthy of commendation.

4. Consult with parents. Some household chores (e.g., table-setting, laundry-sorting) are valuable ways of encouraging a responsible role in the family, and are also excellent thinking tasks for young children.

5. Extend manipulative and creative activities into the academic realm. Use them as a basis for writing and reading.

6. Once the child has gained enough confidence to engage in learning tasks, increase their complexity. Expect high-quality work at the child's own level.

7. Provide feedback about successes and progress (e.g., "Do you remember how hard that seemed--and now it's easy!").

8. Ask the child to help someone else who needs assistance.

9. Provide special work. (For example, Sherrie wrote imaginative stories to display beside the teacher's desk and earn attention from her friends.)

10. If academic progress is poor, focus on increasing the level of performance so that the child will see himself/herself as a learner.

<u>To Increase Group Participation</u>

11. Some children do not share their thoughts, especially if they fear being laughed at or rejected. Direct to them questions which they can answer correctly or which can have a variety of responses (e.g., "How else could we have ended the story?").

12. Hold discussions in small groups, which are less intimidating.

13. Ask the shy child first, before the other children, then follow up on his/her response.

<u>To Overcome Fear of Mistakes</u>

14. Call mistakes "goofing". Let children see that everyone goofs at times, and that errors can be corrected (e.g., "That's why we have erasers").

15. Help children to reason out loud. Accept their wrong answers and praise their thinking. (For example, few primary children can understand density, but they may try to figure out why some things float and some sink. The experiment is worthy even if the conclusions are incorrect.)

16. Minimize competition. Group the child with children who are creative and co-operative.

All the strategies in this book can help develop a healthy and realistic self-concept. Children's self-concept is based on their experiences with events and materials, their interactions with peers and adults, and their own resulting impressions. How they are judged affects their self-judgement, what they do affects their view of self as instrument and effector. Thus, any teacher decisions which increase children's capabilities as group member, academic achiever, or independent actor will also influence their self-image.

All the teachers considered acceptance, encouragement, and praise important in building self-concept. Their strategies included much positive contact, little criticism, and direct, one-to-one talk about feelings, values, and expectations. Increasing the opportunity for self-chosen activities was also viewed as a step towards independence.

Strategies for Self-Concept

1. Look behind the surface behaviours. (For instance, braggarts give the impression that they "think they're better than the other kids", and tempt others to "want to take them down a peg". Often, however, they are just seeking admiration in a way unlikely to win it--a losing strategy. The child who adopts a "baby role" or that of the class clown also is seeking affection and attention, and has probably found the role successful.) Talk privately about your perceptions, and work on developing social and other skills.

2. If the poor self-image reflects parental judgement, work to counteract the image. (For example, one teacher, informed by parents that their son was "uncontrollable" decided that "it was their problem--there's nothing wrong with the kid". She then carefully explained the rules, enforced them firmly, and worked on building a positive teacher-pupil relationship. "He's a good kid who sometimes behaves badly but can learn to do better.")

3. Work with parents, especially if they are worried about their role. Often, parents are insecure about discipline or independence. Assist them by describing your own methods in a non-directive way.

4. Provide a calm and predictable environment. Children gain confidence when their expectations are proved valid, enabling them to plan ahead and work towards purposeful goals.

IV. Self-Direction

Problem 15: Lack of Initiative

Lack of initiative was characterized by an inability to choose a task or activity when the opportunity for such choice was provided. It was not a problem therefore in classes where all activities were chosen by the teacher, or where inactivity or non-involvement was permitted. Six of the twenty-four teachers cited this problem as accompanying another such as insecurity, fear of new situations, dependency on the teacher, timidity, or disruptive behaviour. The teachers named all the accompanying problems as causal, and directed their main strategies towards them. Thus, they used strategies of increased and positive attention, reassurance, and encouragement. The teachers felt protective towards these children, and did not press them to try new activities, but instead used inviting approaches.

Two children who had come from schools where choices were seldom provided were shown how to use centres and were encouraged to talk about the things they could make or accomplish at each one. This aid helped them know how to choose and to understand what they really were expected to do so. One child was given a "choice book", in which he could mark the activities to be selected and done each day. He was pleased and used it to record his chosen and completed activities, receiving a sticker for each one. The book seemed to be providing an incentive to both initiative and self-direction, when, unfortunately, the child was withdrawn from school and his choice book left behind.

Strategies for Initiative

1. Encourage new interests. (For example, several children chose pencil or cut-and-paste activities. Their teachers removed those materials temporarily, so they would do other things.)
2. Have children draw what they build (to extend representational skills), or build what they draw (to encourage creativity and motor skills).
3. Involve parents in planning new experiences to develop thinking.
4. Help children to relax so that they will risk new situations.
5. Use contracts. The children must make choices and follow through on their plan.
6. Let the child be in charge of some new equipment or centre, or demonstrate it to others.

Problems 16, 17, 18: Behavioural, Academic, and Management Concerns

Classroom routines form the framework for school learning, both social and academic. Well constituted, they permit a cheerful, task-centred environment with a minimum of distraction; without them, a group cannot function cohesively or smoothly. The teachers therefore considered as problems those children who consistently deviated from the norms of the class, often describing them as lacking self-discipline or needing self-control. Several of these children also showed disruptive behaviour (which frequently elicited the same descriptions). The teachers distinguished between the two categories on grounds of both intensity and effect on other pupils, considering the latter behaviour as being more serious. However, similar strategies were applied successfully for both problems, perhaps suggesting that the distinction was unnecessary.

Nonetheless, observation showed that problems with routines were often associated with different kinds of classroom events. Some children complied with behavioural routines, but not with those related to academic work. Sometimes the converse was true. Routines were therefore redefined according to their purpose and the kinds of rules they represented. Behavioural routines refer to the customary rules of conduct such as lining up, raising one's hand, not talking out. Academic routines include such task-related procedures as starting and finishing work, selecting activities, following directions. Management routines consist of general school rules such as arriving on time, moving between classes, getting permission to leave the room.

In Kindergartens, teachers did not initially expect children to know or conform to routines, and worried only when a child failed to adapt to responsibilities such as sharing or listening quietly during group sessions. (The maturationist Kindergarten program had few requirements and hence no problems with routines.) All the Kindergarten teachers viewed a rich environment as the best means of assisting children to take responsibility, but the children they named also received much extra attention and explanation of classroom procedures, usually with avoidance of criticism.

In Grades 1 and 2, the teachers assumed knowledge of routines on the part of the children, and were more concerned with adherence to them. Strategies of direct explanation and increased or positive attention were chosen in most cases of non-compliance, as were physical arrangements (usually seating away from distractors).

These strategies were generally successful. However, observation showed that infractions of classroom rules, especially behavioural routines, were much more frequent than the cited problems would suggest. When they occurred, the teachers used reminders, redirection, or reprimands (e.g., "You're supposed to be working"; "It's too noisy in here"). These responses usually occurred during lessons, when the teacher was occupied with a group and other children were engaged in seatwork or activities. They were so customary and ingrained that the teachers were often unaware of them, and hence neither evaluated them nor counted them as strategies. On the whole, they were not very effective, occurring repeatedly and having only short-lived results.

Children who misbehaved when in large-group activities improved when given quiet alternatives to group work. However, the more frequent practice was to exclude the disturber. For children who liked group sessions, this was an effective consequence. For others, it was perceived as a punishment, annoying, but not enough to be a deterrent. For them, exclusion became a routine ("She always sends me out to the hall," said one aggrieved pupil), and the problem remained unsolved.

Strategies for Behavioural Routines

1. Apply the strategies for disruptive behaviour (Problem 7). Most routine concerns faded when the underlying problems were resolved.

2. Use many of the routines and management practices developed for whole classes--see chapter 3 for descriptions.

3. Arrange private signals with the child to serve as cues or reminders of rules.

Strategies for Academic Routines

1. Apply the strategies for Problem 19.

2. Use logical consequences to help children attend to directions. (For example, one teacher, noticing that Annette was not listening, said, "If you don't listen, you won't know what to do", and gave the group instructions. The teacher did not interfere when Annette did the wrong exercise, but then pointed out that she still had to complete the group requirement. The process did not have to be repeated.)

3. If laxity is caused by boredom or lack of challenge, increase your standards for quality (e.g., require greater thought in creative art or writing, or a more difficult level in skill subjects).

4. If the child's finishing work is a problem, allow the child to use the recess or noon hour to catch up if he/she wishes. (If you impose this idea, learning may seem a chore or punishment.)

5. If children's work habits appear to lapse, check for illness or home problems.

6. Check with parents to increase consistency between your expectations and theirs.

7. Behaviour modification may increase a child's attention to academic tasks. If you decide on this strategy, ensure that the child can complete the tasks given and earn the reinforcements. You may have to begin with extra short or easy assignments.

Strategies for Management Routines

1. Use direct explanation, walking through the routines, or pairing with a child competent in the routines to increase rule-guided behaviour.

2. Using behaviour modification may help, (e.g., in cases of tardiness, you may give a star each time a pupil arrives on time and a reward at the end of a week).

3. In Kindergarten, the chief requirement is usually time to adjust to the rules. Make sure they are few in number, clear, and simple to follow.

Problem 19: Academic Difficulty

Initially, because the study was focused on children's social and emotional functioning, few cases of academic difficulty were cited; the teachers considered academic problems to be different in nature from affective problems. However, discussions and observations made it clear that academic status was closely related to social and emotional well-being, and that some children required strategies to abet growth in all these areas. As well, some children encountered difficulties in Grades 1 or 2 that had not been predicted from their previous school records, because they had not fully grasped needed concepts or skills. Therefore, by the spring term, fifty-two cases of academic difficulty were cited, all in Grades 1 and 2, and ninety-eight strategy implementations were directed towards them.

The most frequent strategy, as expected, was some form of modification of curriculum or organization. Most of these changes, however, did not affect the teacher's overall practice. A particular child might be given shorter assignments, be permitted a slower pace in a prescribed workbook, or be moved to a different reading group, but the kind of work or style of presentation was very seldom changed, and the change rarely affected other children in the same group or class. Several teachers, however, responded with more substantial changes when they perceived a difficulty to be common to several children.

Seventeen of the children with academic problems were referred for testing and/or remediation. Some of the children were given special help in English as a second language or reading and, less often, in mathematics skills. Remediation, for the most part, seemed to be a way of providing more instructional time in the basics; in most cases it did not mean the use of different approaches, methods, or interests. It may also imply an assumption that pupils in a particular grade ought to be able to do the prescribed work and that inability to do so suggests a problem in the child rather than in the work or in the instructional method used. This opinion was, indeed, expressed by two teachers, one of whom used the phrase, "He really doesn't belong in this class".

These inferences are further supported by the other strategies chosen: use of an aide, consultation with parents, and increased attention or positive interaction. All were intended

to help the children adapt to the program, not the reverse. For five children, a non-intervention strategy was used. Since these children were expected to repeat the year, the teachers did not wish to overburden them with work they could not do. However, alternative learnings or activities were not provided to ensure that the children were being guided, in the meantime, towards the eventual attainment of academic objectives, and they were not experiencing academic successes which might encourage future learning.

Not all academic strategies were as just described. Several creative and imaginative strategies were adopted, and some organizational changes were made to accommodate greater variation in pace and style of learning. Two teachers, for example, replaced their reading groups with individualized approaches, several used Big Books as an incentive to reading, one adopted Mastery Learning techniques for arithmetic, and several increased the manipulative component of mathematics teaching. These were all methods adopted from the whole-group strategies, described in chapter 3.

These, however, were the minority; most cases of academic difficulty were met by strategies of more of the same. It is notable that the teachers' discussions often suggested that the work or learning activities might easily be modified or replaced by alternative activities leading to the same objectives. In practice, however, this was seldom done, and cross-disciplinary activities or play were not often used to help overcome difficulties in a specific area.

Strategies for Academic Difficulties

1. Use diagnostic teaching to pinpoint concepts or skills that have not been correctly mastered. Provide corrective activities.

2. Design tasks that capitalize on strengths. (For example, use oral skills to promote writing, art projects for environmental studies topics: children may use a variety of real flowers to design pictures. If children can count, but have trouble recognizing numbers, have them use number cards to label groups of objects they have counted. If the reverse is true, have him match the appropriate number of objects to numerals on cards.)

3. When introducing a new concept, use a low level of abstraction. Follow up with increasingly abstract tasks. (For example, early graphs may use objects or pictures of objects in a one-to-one correspondence. Next the objects can be represented by stickers varying only in colour. Finally, two-to-one or more complex correspondences may be graphed.)

4. Design learning tasks so that the objectives may be accomplished at different levels. (For example, although some children may not need to do graphs at every level and others may need to do several at each level, everyone can extend graphing skills.)

VI. Miscellaneous

Problem 20: Miscellaneous

This category accounted for problems that did not fall into the other classifications, and included thirty altogether. Teachers mentioned concerns which were unique to particular children (e.g., "She carries a bag all the time"; "He's supposed to wear his glasses"; "They're friends, but their parents don't approve"). Other situations, although related to the category labels, were different from the other concerns grouped under those labels: for example, giftedness or a special interest suggested the academic area, but was a difficulty only if the teacher wished to respond with challenging activities within the regular classroom.

Stealing was mentioned in four cases; all were viewed as related to self-concept, but the responses differed for each child. Dependence on a sibling or friend was cited in three children; the teachers usually tried to place these children in separate groups or give them different tasks. Oddities or mannerisms of personal behaviour were usually dealt with by direct explanation and, often, with signals as reminders. Some who indicated a need for attention were given that response; in several cases teachers invented special tasks or duties that could be carried out to win recognition and a sense of pride.

On the whole, the miscellaneous category was appropriately named. No generalizations can be drawn from the problems involved except a caution that teachers must be prepared for all contingencies and expect the unexpected.

CHAPTER 3: WHOLE-CLASS STRATEGIES

Although most of the problems raised by the Project Thrive teachers centred around individual children, several group or whole-class concerns kept recurring. Many of these were of an academic or managerial nature, but all affected the mood or climate of the class. Several teachers felt that too much time and energy were diverted to the maintenance of classroom discipline, producing annoyance and frustration in themselves and the children. The teachers in the more open classes, however, had adopted many practices to reduce or solve such problems, and most were easily transferable to the traditional settings. The strategies in this chapter, then, have proved to be suitable for any style of primary classroom.

Establishing a Positive and Responsive Learning Environment

Young children's learning is strongly affected by the classroom setting, which influences both their motivation and their self-concept as learner. Many of the effective strategies developed, therefore, were designed to keep children focused on their work and to help them develop good work habits: following directions, completing assignments satisfactorily, working independently, etc. By providing a highly motivating learning environment, many of the teachers succeeded in reducing the need for reminders and reprimands, thereby lowering the stress levels in their classroom and increasing positive affect. Many found that the most important strategies were those related to establishing a friendly social climate and managerial routines that would support an active and task-centred approach to learning.

Strategies for Maintaining a Positive Social Climate

1. Keep teacher-pupil contacts as positive as you can. Avoid actions or comments that humiliate a child. Criticize in private, praise in public.

2. Do not speak of children in their presence as if they could not hear you.

3. Criticize using specific, not general, terms. Indicate the way to improvement. (For example, rather than, "That page is a mess", say, "Those marks aren't erased very well; it would be better if you used a sharper pencil").

4. Speak to the children directly and with clear meaning to express your feelings, both negative and positive, and your expectations. (Examples: "It makes me very uncomfortable when you all cluster around to get my attention; please sit down and put up your hand." "Okay, that's great; when you're all working with the activities like this, I feel really proud.")

5. Make Kindergarten snacktime a pleasant experience and provide an opportunity for each child to speak and be spoken to (e.g., an aide, volunteer, or older student can take a few children at a time to a prettily set table to sit and chat with them while they eat; many children who do not ordinarily talk enjoy conversing in this situation).

Strategies for an Orderly and Relaxed Classroom

1. Develop consistent routines that do not require teacher supervision. Managerial routines can take up a great deal of time that would better be devoted to instructional or social interaction with children. (For instance, reduce, the time necessary for using supplies, washroom permission, and cleanup; reduce the negative effects of waiting, nagging, and constant directing.)

   a) To facilitate washroom permission, have a name card for each child. The child hangs the card beside the door when leaving and removes the card upon returning. You thus know who is out, and the child need not await your attention for permission to leave.

   b) Choose two children each day as helpers. Include as their duties giving washroom permission, handing out and collecting papers and supplies, and supervising cleanup.

   c) Children working at activities may need supplies or equipment when you are busy. Store all supplies in specified places that children can see and reach (open shelves are best). If shelves are unavailable, store equipment in drawers identified by symbols in Kindergarten, by number or letter in Grade 1 (to help children identify letters and numbers), or by more elaborate labels in higher grades.

2. Use signals to get attention from the whole group (e.g., turn out the lights, put your hands up, or use a particular word in a carrying voice: "Eyes!".)

3. Ensure that all children know the routines of the school and the classroom. Lead all routines and describe them explicitly until they are automatic (e.g., "When I turn out the lights, stop whatever you are doing and listen"). In Kindergarten, you can use a repertoire of songs to teach safety rules, classroom manners, routines. Songs provide the advantage of a fair, impersonal authority when a reminder is needed (e.g., "We've already sung the cleanup song, Janice. What do we do now?").

4. If some children are slow to learn or accept classroom rules, do not nag, but "give away the job." Once a rule has been explained and understood by the class, do not repeat it. Use phrases like "What am I going to say?" or "Tell him why we don't climb the curtains."

5. Avoid lengthy or chaotic intervals between activities; these are often times when disruptions or silliness occur.

   a) Use timetables to minimize transitions (e.g., schedule show-and-tell and story-time together while the children are in a group on the floor, printing and spelling while they are seated at desks, and reading groups after seatwork is assigned).

   b) Inform children ahead of time about scheduled periods (e.g., art, gym), and remind them a few minutes before the end of an activity time or work period so that they can bring their work to a close and organize their equipment for the next class.

6. Often, children are unfocused after a holiday or other absence and you may need to ease them back into routines.

   a) Take extra time to talk about the holiday experience and integrate it into language, art, and drama activities. Since for many children holidays are more meaningful after they have been experienced, have some activities after the event.

   b) Explain to the children your perceptions of their behaviour (e.g., one teacher pointed out to the children that irregular hours and many sweets could make them excitable, and asked them to try to "get more rest and avoid junk food for a while").

Strategies for Reducing Noise

1. Although a work environment is not silent, it does require sufficient quiet to permit concentration on tasks. Allow children to consult and help one another, but have them modulate their voice. Use signals when the noise level climbs too high; a special signal may be needed for the loud-voiced child.

2. If some activity centres are very noisy (e.g., large blocks), close them during reading or seatwork periods. Keep quiet activities available.

3. If group lessons are disturbed by noise, try one of the following:

   a) Reduce the group to two or three children, so that you may sit close together for discussion.

   b) Have the group sit behind a bookshelf, divider, or piano to reduce the noise level.

   c) Do not worry about the noise; it probably does not disturb the children as much as you.

4. You may wish to use the hallways or other space to extend your activity areas, but worry that other classes may be disturbed. It may help to:

   a) Use the hallway for quiet centres (e.g., painting, clay modelling, reading) and keep the noisy centres inside the class.

   b) Muffle noisy activities by using rugs, padded hammers, etc.

   c) Cluster Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes together so as not to disturb older classes. This practice also facilitates the use of shared equipment such as large blocks, sand tables, and woodworking centres.

Managing Social Problems

Social relationships strongly affect the emotional climate and concentration on learning. Although most social problems were dealt with on an individual basis (see Problems 5 to 12), some were modified by whole-class approaches such as the following.

Strategies for Integrating the Rejected Child

1. When the class does not accept a child (a new child, or one who is bossy, withdrawn, or aggressive, etc.), employ whole-group discussion to decide how to help the isolate become part of the group. It is important to let the children give their ideas without blaming, and to hear all positive suggestions. In some instances, it might be better to hold the first discussion in the rejected child's absence.

2. Use role-playing and/or co-operative games to help the child participate.

3. Seat the child with one or two others who can tolerate him/her and from whom he/she can acquire some social skills.

Strategies for Tattling

1. Since children tattle to get attention rather than to inform, provide a positive but non-committal response (e.g., to "Sam's printing with a red pencil", reply, "Oh, that will be very colourful"; to "John and Chris are fighting", reply, "Is anyone getting hurt?"). It is important to receive the information, however, so that you will be informed if the issue really is serious.

2. Use class discussion to help children distinguish between reporting and tattling.

3. Give tattlers much attention when they are not tattling.

Strategies for Children Who Are Slow to Adapt

1. Realize that children who are shy or "slow to warm up" take several weeks to adjust to a new class.

2. Keep the same class for two or more years.

3. Use split grades to keep children for whom a continued teacher-pupil relationship is desirable.

4. Use split grades to permit flexible grouping (to keep children with friends or with a teacher of compatible personality, and to separate those who do not interact well.)

5. Keep the class together, and confer with the next teacher about the children's needs.

6. Carefully choose the teacher to whom each child will be sent.

Problems Caused Outside the Classroom

A frequent source of teacher frustration is interference from outside the classroom which constrains or limits the program. Sometimes this must be endured, but often steps can be taken to minimize the effects.

Strategies for Problems Outside the Classroom

1. The lengthy activity periods needed for primary classes are often interrupted by scheduled periods for library, gym, etc. Most principals have not taught primary children and may be unaware of this need. Work on an appropriate timetable and present it to the principal before the new school schedule has been prepared.

2. Teaching objectives should take precedence over cleaning objectives. If the janitor wants the desks in rows, equipment off the floor, etc., and makes it difficult for work groups and activity centres to be established, all Kindergarten and primary teachers should meet with the principal. The principal can then request that janitors leave furniture as you wish.

3. If noise from other classes moving in hallways is disturbing, ask the other teachers to use an alternate route or ask for the stairways to be carpeted.

4. If PA announcements and opening exercises are ill-timed and inappropriate for Kindergarten and primary classes, turn off the PA and lead your own opening exercises in an appropriate time and style.

5. To avoid children dawdling or fighting when changing to outdoor clothes in the cloakroom or hallway, have them bring their clothes into the classroom to dress.

6. Since primary children may become upset and fearful when children fight on the playground:

   a) Have a separate recess for primary grades to reduce crowding and stress on the playground.

   b) Make balls, skipping ropes, etc., available at recess time.

   c) Get parents to build or donate playground equipment.

   d) Decide on a playground policy for the whole staff to implement. Have a standard procedure that can be followed by all teachers. (For example, in one school, anyone fighting is taken to the office. The rule is understood by all, and seldom needed.)

One aspect of the social climate that is of great concern to teachers is the maintenance of control or discipline. Although disruptive behaviour was minimized by well structured managerial and academic routines, it did still occur at times. Some children seemed to attract trouble or to incite it in others; most of them were dealt with on an individual basis (see Problems 7 to 11). Sometimes, however, teachers modified the setting or their personal style to improve the tone of the classroom while still retaining firm authority.

Strategies for Discipline

1. Use a general, impersonal form, rather than a personal one, to invoke rules that apply to all children.

2. When a problem is developing, intervene and redirect the children without accusing or criticising. Suggest possible alternatives.

3. When children misbehave, avoid blame. Focus on correcting the situation. (For example, "Hitting is not allowed in this class. It will be better if you sit away from him.")

4. Avoid asking, "Why did you do that?" Instead, clarify the feeling underlying the behaviour and explain your perceptions. (For example, "When you're angry, you feel like hitting someone." "Could it be that you wanted to hurt him?").

5. Help the children find other outlets for their feelings. (For example, "When you feel like hitting someone, would it help to ...?").

6. Teach children to use words rather than fists, and to negotiate for what they want. Teach them to solve conflicts, not just to avoid or suppress them.

7. Check if there is a pattern to disruptive behaviour. (For example, observers noted that Martin became disruptive whenever he was unable to do his work. Work at an appropriate level of difficulty helped to reduce his misbehaviour.)

8. Have another adult in the classroom to work with disruptive children. Many such children need attention, and work better with frequent feedback.

9. For children who disrupt group activities, provide alternative quiet activities nearby. They will usually listen in while working, and so all parties benefit.

10. Have restless children hold something while listening (e.g., one teacher had a set of furry "finger mice", which the children seemed to find comforting and soothing.)

11. Consult with parents for information or co-operation in dealing with their children.

12. If one or more children continually interact in a disruptive manner, re-arrange the groups to lessen temptation. If disruptive behaviour is extreme, move the instigator to another class. (This is not a punishment. A disruptive child may be less so in a new group where the dynamics are different and he/she has not established behaviour expectations. The children in the class can help him/her develop new patterns of behaviour.)

Teachers are aware of the need to provide a classroom environment which is warm and supportive of children's learning. A prime ingredient is the establishment of clear, simple routines which permit both teacher and children to focus on learning tasks.

Academic routines include all those related to procedures for doing assigned work or for using centres, completing and submitting work, marking, following instructions, and so on. When they are well understood, they facilitate a task-centred and business-like classroom.

Many teachers find that their pupils are not ready for lessons when they first enter the classroom. Some are "wound up and full of energy", others are tired and lethargic. Several strategies were developed to make profitable use of this time; the tactics chosen varied with the teacher's personal style.

Strategies for Helping Children Settle Down

1. Have quiet activities, seatwork, or books available for children to use when they enter the room.
2. Have a group discussion first.
3. Have a rigorous health hustle before beginning lessons.
4. Use a choice chart or choice sheet (see p. 42) to permit children to begin with whatever kind of work they are ready for.
5. Use a timer to measure settling down time. Keep a graph and encourage the class to decrease this time. (This technique is effective in inducing change quickly, but eventually loses its impact.)
6. Use cues to indicate what behaviour is desirable (e.g., "I like the way George hung up his coat and came right to the rug"). Caution: Children may outgrow this technique by seven or eight years of age.
7. Use logical consequences to take yourself out of the struggle. (For example, when the noise is too great to ignore, sit down quietly, open your notebook, and say, "We have a lot of important work to do, and very little time for it all. I'm not going to waste my time, so I'll work on something else until you decide that you are ready to work. Whatever time we lose now we will make up at recess." This strategy usually works after a few tries. After the first time, just sit down quietly to work, saying nothing. Caution: If this strategy is not effective after two or three tries, abandon it. School work should not be a punishment, and detentions should not become routine.)
8. Take Opening Exercises seriously. Teach the meanings of the anthem and prayers, and repeat them thoughtfully (e.g., one teacher used a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer that the children could understand, followed by a few minutes of silent reflection; quiet individual work followed).

Strategies for Starting Seatwork Promptly

1. Tell the children how much time you think the task requires, and how much is available.

2. Check the slow starters after a few minutes, and encourage them to continue (e.g., "Good, you've got started! How about the next one?").

3. Tell the children what work they will have for the morning (day, week), and let them decide their own timetable.

4. Some children know they can dawdle and still finish on time. Encourage them to finish and then choose a quiet activity (e.g. plasticine, lego) or go on to their next assignment.

Strategies for Ensuring Work Is Completed

1. Use a checklist. Have children mark off their own names when the assigned work is completed, then put it in the "in box" for marking.

2. Check the work of non-finishers before it is put away for another activity.

3. For children who continually fail to finish their work, determine if they understand the directions, if the work is interesting, if the work is at their level, and if there is any other way they could achieve the learning objectives.

4. Some children do not finish because they cannot; they may have trouble with handwriting or simply find the work difficult. Shorten their assignments rather than allowing poor or incomplete work.

5. Do not worry about being unfair in giving children different amounts or kinds of work. If children have different levels and learning styles, it may be unfair not to.

Strategies for Helping Children Follow Instructions

1. Many children are impulsive and anticipate instructions rather than listening carefully. To counteract this tendency, change your usual pattern of directions.

2. Show a worksheet or activity that resembles one the children have done. Ask, "How do you think we do those?" If the response is partly right, focus on the different instructions for the new task.

3. Play listening games like Simon Says or use exercise records with verbal instructions that children must attend to carefully.

4. Let children observe one another's work methods. Imitation is a useful form of learning. But be alert for children who simply copy someone else's product because they do not understand the nature of the task well enough to do it themselves.

Strategies for Encouraging Concentration

1. Whenever possible, use a play approach to maximize learning. This is especially useful for language, mathematics, and environmental science.

2. When children are working, be available for coaching assistance. Remain seated, and let children come to you if they wish.

3. At activity time, circulate quietly, responding to the children and really attending to them.

4. Use open-ended, thought-producing questions to encourage greater interest and learning. Children's answers may not sound right to an adult, but can still be attempts at reasoning and explanation.

5. Use a theme approach to ensure a balanced curriculum while maintaining interest and participation.

6. Have several ways of meeting an objective, so that children may choose one suited to their learning style and level.

7. Use worksheets or charts to permit self-pacing and choice of activities. These may include assigned activities to be done during the day.

Self-Chosen Learning Activities in the Classroom

Most primary teachers feel strongly that play activities are important learning experiences for children, contributing to the development of general knowledge as well as language, mathematical, and social skills. However, pressure for academic achievement may make it difficult to include them in the timetable. Several of the Project Thrive teachers found ways of doing so.

Strategies for Including Self-Chosen Learning Activities

1. To make time for self-chosen activities, divide the class in two groups; alternate the groups, sending one with an aide to the gym for 45 minutes and keeping the other with you. Children in smaller numbers work better at centres, gain more teacher attention, and have increased access to materials.

2. a) In Kindergartens, have free play except for gym period, recess, and a brief group time at the end of the morning.

   b) In Grades 1 and 2, allot a specific part of the day (25 per cent to 80 per cent of the timetable) to activity, either for everyone at once or half the class at a time.

3. Children in the lowest ability group need creative activities, but often do not finish their work quickly enough to allow time for productive play. Schedule their reading group first and keep their seatwork brief to ensure a daily activity period.

4. Schedule activity time before work periods for one or more groups.

5. Often the children go to activities, but do not work purposefully if they know their time is short. Provide a different group each day with a very short seatwork assignment. Permitting them to start activities while the other children are still working increases both time and choice of activities.

6. Children who wait for the teacher to check their work have little time for self-chosen activities. When the daily assignment is complete, have each child check his/her name off a list. For example:

	Printing	Math.	Phonics	Story	Silent	Rdg.	Other
George	X		X		X		
Susan	X	X		X			
Stella	X	X	X			X	

Then have the child put the work in the appropriate place (often a box or basin) and choose an activity. Alternatively, the checklist may be omitted.

Strategies for Full and Balanced Learning Experiences

1. If some children keep choosing the same activity, use individual dittoed choice sheets. Let the children choose their activity, marking it on their sheet when done. Let them do the activities in any order, and at their own pace, but they must complete all activities on the sheet. Activities used may be in relation to a theme, and may be completed daily, weekly, or at longer intervals; they may include just free-time activities or the entire weekly learning plan.

   Sample Choice Sheet for a Two- or Three-Week Unit, on a Carnival Theme:

Bonhomme game (vocabulary)	Math worksheets	Snowman (Math facts)	Math: Buttons (sorting)
Painting masks	Mural	Poem	Story
Little Book	Ice sculpture	Skating	Extra (your choice)

2. Use a permanent choice chart. Have each child choose an activity and put his/her name beside it on the chart. For example:

Sand	Water	Writing	Math	Art	Construction	Library
Susan		George	Stella			

   Letting the children choose early in the day requires them to plan and follow through, and thus encourages responsibility.

   Some variations are:

   a) Use a weekly chart: The child must choose an activity not already chosen during the week.

   b) Tell children they must show at least three different kinds of activities each day.

   c) Tell children that each week they must complete activities in each area.

   d) For Kindergarten choice charts, use pictures to designate activity centres.

3. Open centres to specified groups. (For example, "Today only girls may use the blocks." "Ducks may use the cut-and-paste materials, Herons are at the clay table, Bluebirds may paint, and Buzzards will continue the building they started this morning.")

4. Employ teacher invitation or direction (e.g., "It would be nice if you could do ... sometime today." "I'd like you to do ...").

5. Unobtrusively begin an activity and continue until the children become curious. (For example, to encourage development in block construction, build two walls with a corner joint; explain only if asked. One teacher, having read aloud Peter Rabbit, built a giant "watering can" out of paper and it became a focal point for much dramatization and language development.)

6. Participate in children's play to enrich and extend it, but leave the initiative with the children. (For example, many children love to have an adult take part in pretend play, and may use richer images and language when a grown-up is included.)

Strategies for Maintaining Useful Centres

1. If children take materials from one centre to another and use game pieces or render equipment useless, you may

   a) Re-arrange centres on opposite sides of the room so that borrowing is reduced;

   b) Have a sorting time when misplaced material can be found and returned to the appropriate centre (an excellent classification exercise at all levels);

   c) Amalgamate centres temporarily to encourage new and creative uses of materials without loss.

2. To avoid equipment damage at the centres, you may

   a) Modify the centres (e.g., one teacher removed the filmstrip viewer and replaced it with listening equipment because the viewer was too finicky to be used by young children--had another been found, the centre would have been retained);

   b) Appoint a volunteer to help use the equipment.

3. If children lose interest in a centre or their play becomes desultory, introduce new equipment, close the centre temporarily, or move it to a new location where it can be used in conjunction with another. (For example, cars and animals from the manipulative centre may upgrade sandbox play; sand with different textures may encourage a diversity of construction activities.)

4. To establish productive and inviting centres, observe the children's play to ascertain their needs. (For example, in one very open class without desks, a few children frequently played "school", adopting a very formal traditional model. Some desks introduced into a corner soon became the focal point for their "lessons", as well as a place to read and write. This seemed to please those children who liked a little more than the usual structure.)

Most primary teachers consider children's intellectual development to be an outgrowth of their interests and experiences. Developmental theory (Kamii and DeVries, 1977; Wright, 1983) suggests that self-organized, self-directed activities contribute greatly to the child's knowledge and thought, and that an activity-based program has lasting effects on children's achievement in school. However, parents and administrators may not be aware of the value of play in children's learning, or of the qualities of play that are most beneficial. The teacher's role is therefore essential in developing the primary curriculum.

Strategies for Justifying Activity-Based Learning

1. Explain exactly what play activities can do, and show how they relate to academic objectives.

2. Become knowledgeable in your field so that your opinions will be valued, and so that you can test your intuitive judgements.

3. Work with other teachers in your school and board to improve the primary program.

Whatever their approach, primary teachers are concerned with the foundations of future academic achievement, especially in the areas of mathematics and language arts. However, observation showed that many children spent considerable time off-task, and that several, even when doing assigned exercises, had not grasped the concept which the exercises were supposed to reinforce. Several teachers, therefore, moved to increase concept-building by including more concrete activities in their programs.

Many children who seemed not to apply themselves to their work failed to develop mathematics concepts. Observation showed that their lack of diligence was usually a result, not a cause, of poor understanding.

Strategies for Mathematics

1. Try a Mastery Learning situation combined with much teacher support. (For example, have a large set of mathematics worksheets carefully sequenced from simple to difficult. All children start with the first sheet and proceed at their own pace, moving ahead after each sheet is done correctly. It is essential that the task be presented in a positive way. To one child who at first got his answers all wrong, the teacher said, "Tomorrow you'll get one right." He did, and his teacher responded, "Tomorrow you'll get two right." When he finally got the first sheet right, all the children clapped and cheered, and Michael, beaming with pride of accomplishment, started the next sheet.)

2. Make a list of your mathematics objectives. Most primary mathematics objectives can be achieved through games or activities. Set up centres to permit this. (For example, one class, learning to tell time, had a centre with clocks, automatic timers, and salt-filled egg-timers. Children worked in pairs, timing activities such as "how long it takes to blink ten times, jump three times, walk down the hall". The times elapsed, as well as the starting and finishing times, were recorded and verified. The concept of duration of time was thus included along with the traditional clock-reading activities, counting, adding, and subtracting.)

3. Use Cuisenaire rods or number cubes to help children to a concrete awareness of number relationships. (In classes where each child had a set of rods or cubes, the devices were used easily and flexibly even by those who had difficulty in mathematics.)

4. Use teacher-directed activities to teach mathematics concepts. (For example, several teachers provided materials with which children could perform concrete activities to help them understand the concepts. Using lima beans painted on one side, the children "made 9" in as many ways as possible, recording the combinations in pictures and/or numerals to make number sentences. Using stamps to represent money, the children chose any way to make 25 cents, a dollar, etc.; those who were stronger in mathematics chose larger groupings, while the others grouped by pennies, using a counting tactic.)

5. Capitalize on classroom routines as teaching events. (For example, one teacher, whose pupils were being called out in small groups for testing, first asked, "If you go out six at a time, will it work out evenly? What will be the size of the last group? How could we make the groups equal?")

6. Use snack- or lunch-time for counting and grouping. (For example, "How many cups will we need?" "If we seat 2, 3, 4 ... in a group, how many groups will we have?")

7. Use workbooks so that children can work at their own pace while still following the same program.

8. Avoid whole-class assignments which some children may not understand. Teach faster and slower learners in separate groups.

9. Have children consult each other while doing seatwork assignments. This procedure is especially useful if you are occupied with other pupils.

10. If a child cannot complete assignments in the allotted time, allow him/her to do half the questions.

Strategies for Reading

1. Teachers find that many children are "slow to come to reading" or are not interested in becoming readers. Provide many readiness activities to encourage reading (e.g., teacher-led storytime, Big Books, and many kinds of creative activities encourage language development). Do not coerce children to read.

2. Provide tutorial instruction for those who do not read by the last term of Grade 2.

3. Provide activities to encourage writing and reading. (For example, have children sketch their block or sand constructions, and ask them for a word or two to describe them. Print their words on the page, and staple several sketches into a "book". The children will soon come to recognize the words, and so use the book as a primer. Later books may use simple sentences. Many children write before they read, and use their own productions to develop visual and other reading skills. A variation is to have children underwrite or copy the words into their books.)

4. Employ a variety of approaches that use the children's own language to motivate the stragglers. (For example, give each child a different story book to read and describe to the others in the group. This technique encourages the development of objective representational language, because the children cannot assume a shared experience in their audience.)

5. Use a variety of grouping techniques. (Grouping for social skills helps less skilled children learn how to behave acceptably while also learning to read, protects shy children from those who are overbearing, and encourages withdrawn children to participate. Grouping by interests encourages children of all skill levels to interact purposefully. It is important to have books at several ability levels so that each child will be able to read on the chosen topic and contribute to discussions.)

6. Use a packaged individualized reading program such as SRA or Reader's Digest system.

7. Provide a silent reading time when children may read or look at whatever books they choose.

8. Reduce the time devoted to phonics lessons by integrating phonics into the reading sessions. Spend more time reading with the children.

9. Read several versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella), discuss the differences, and encourage children to find and read other versions.

10. Let children take home a book they have practised so that they may read to their parents.

11. Give children a book they have read on their own, and put their name in it.

Most primary classes include a wide range of achievement levels, and need more reading groups than a teacher has time for. Several strategies were devised for this problem.

Strategies for Alternatives to Reading Groups

1. Read less often with the top group. They are likely to be past the stage where reading aloud is helpful for skill-building, although they still need the opportunity for teacher attention and discussion.

2. Have older pupils come in to hear children read or to read to them.

3. Do not bother with reading groups. Work with children individually or in small groups as convenient. You may do this with readers, trade books, or packaged programs like SRA or Reader's Digest. Alternatively, let children prepare their reading selection to bring when they are ready. If they do not come, you may wish to call them. If they come too often, you may suggest a more advanced book or story and explain that you have confidence in their ability to read on their own.

4. Have children who can read well read to others who cannot. The listener should be a volunteer or have some choice of the material read.

5. Have the able readers tutor the less able. To encourage the tutors to see themselves as helper rather than teacher or boss, it may be useful to tell the children receiving help that they are in charge.

6. Use an aide, assistant, or adult volunteer to coach the higher reading groups and lead their discussion so that you have more time for those in difficulty.

Strategies for Writing

1. To help children who do not write very creatively do better, have them act out stories together before writing.

2. Talk out story ideas before asking children to write. (For example, one teacher introduced the topic of hats: "Who wears hats? What do they tell you? How do you feel when you wear a hat?" After much discussion and exchange of ideas, the children pretended they were the hats and wrote some fascinating stories.)

3. Teach editing skills to help children write for an audience. (For example, Sandra wrote, "I did all the same stuff as last week." Teacher: "Do you think the class will know what you mean by 'all the same stuff'?" Sandra: "No, I'll put some details in here.")

4. Type the children's stories and have them illustrate them, read them to the class, and put them in the class library. (A volunteer might be useful for these procedures.)

5. Have the children make Big Books, Little Books, or Shape Books for the class library. (For example, use a favourite story, a special toy or activity, or a nonsense theme like "Animals should not eat spaghetti because...." Give each child a page, or ask a group to work together on a book. (Let Kindergarten children dictate their story.)

6. Have an aide, adult volunteer, or older pupil take dictation from the children. (This strategy is especially helpful to those children for whom the manual skills of writing are a struggle.)

7. To permit children to follow their imagination, encourage them to use invented spellings to write their own stories.

8. Use a Book-of-the-Month approach to writing stories. Have each child make a booklet related to the current theme or a personal interest. Alternatively, do this as a class or group project, and add the books to the class library.

9. Have each child keep a daily journal, which you do not mark, criticize, or even read unless invited.

10. Provide experiences and foster enthusiasm for writing. (For example, have children in Grade 8 team up with their primary-grade partners for special events like tobogganing, cooking, or class parties, and then help them write stories. Let the children also write letters, invitations, and thank-you notes to their pals.)

11. Discuss several versions of a story, using books, films, and drama, and encourage the children to write their own version.

Young children need prompt feedback, but the teacher may not have the time to mark their work as soon as it is completed.

Strategies for Marking Daily Work

1. Have children place their completed paper work in a bin, and go on to other activities. Then call them up to discuss the work as it is marked, or simply return it if no difficulties are noted. (This procedure eliminates waiting, a common source of disruption or useless inactivity.)

2. Appoint helpers daily to mark worksheets from an answer key, and to help edit stories.

3. Mark all work and return it by 3:10. Allow children time to correct it and have it rechecked before going home.

4. Permit children to bring you their work while you are with a reading group, mark it quickly, and return it, all the while "listening with the other ear". (This procedure has the disadvantage of being rather discourteous to the reader.)

Marking implies checking assigned work and returning it quickly, thus providing children with information about their achievement and the opportunity to correct errors. Marking, however, does not always provide adequately for evaluation, which includes an assessment of both pupil status and needs. Thus, while marking arithmetic may indicate that a child subtracts well or poorly, it does not explain why or what approach would most suitably overcome a difficulty. Evaluation was found to be most effective when daily work checks were combined with observation and individual teacher-pupil conferences. As one teacher remarked, "You really get to know how they're thinking".

Strategies for Evaluating Academic Progress

1. When marking mathematics or language exercises, look for systematic errors that indicate an incorrect concept or problem-solving approach.

2. Ask children who have made errors to explain how they "figured out the answer". Often, if there are many errors, they are not due to carelessness.

3. Observe children's play to assess their levels of social, conceptual and artistic skills, language use, and activity preferences.

4. Participate in play activities to obtain a fuller knowledge of children's capabilities.

5. In Kindergarten, assign some work-jobs that the children can perform rather than giving them assessment tests. Such tasks demonstrate academic readiness, which may be required in some boards for final reports.

Meeting the Needs of the Teacher

Project Thrive demonstrated that teachers' effectiveness was strongly related to their perception of teaching and their self-image as teacher. As they solved classroom problems, they grew more creative and experimental in developing strategies, not only to solve problems, but also to extend the possibilities of experiential learning in their classroom. Several remarked that the professional exchanges and feedback from the observers provided their first opportunity for objective evaluation of their teaching practices. They, like their pupils, profited from an awareness of their competence and gained confidence from their achievements.

Strategies for Meeting Teacher Needs

1. Meet with teachers from another school (or two others) to discuss problems and develop new ways of dealing with them. (Project Thrive results showed that meetings of teachers from a single school were not as productive, since they were already familiar with one another's approaches and strategies.)

2. Have a Teacher Centre, to provide a meeting place and a repository for books, journals, and equipment for teachers to use.

3. Create situations which will enable you to do your best work.

   a) Make the principal aware of special needs or services your pupils may require. Use written dated memos to reduce forgetting, and enlist the assistance of the school secretary if requested services are not forthcoming.

   b) Collect supplies to make an activity approach effective. If the budget does not provide for needed play materials, share equipment and centres with other teachers by putting some centres in the hall or by letting children go to another room to use them; frequent garage sales and ask parents for toys and equipment their children no longer need; enlist the PTA to raise money for equipment (e.g., one school had a strong and prosperous PTA which raised thousands of dollars through craft sales, etc.).

   c) Enlist the children in planning spatial arrangements to facilitate work.

4. Invite another teacher or student teacher to observe your class or particular students. Use the feedback in planning activities.

5. Develop interests and talents outside of teaching to remain an inspired and inspiring teacher.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In some ways, this study served to reinforce many familiar ideas about teaching. All the participating teachers were strongly concerned with their pupils' progress and worked hard to effect it. Although they used different approaches, they shared perceptions about children and learning, and held many aims in common. All felt that self-concept was an essential characteristic of the good learner and that the teacher-pupil relationship was indispensable in fostering its healthy development. Most believed that a positive, non-threatening classroom climate could promote beneficial attitudes to work and learning. All were interested in adopting new methods and techniques that would assist the overall functioning of their classes and help to deal with their concerns about individual children.

In spite of these commonalities, it was evident that teacher styles were distinctive and that they determined, to a great extent, the teachers' perceptions of the pupils and the kinds of change they would adopt. Those who used more traditional methods also required more conformity in both conduct and academic behaviour; group cohesion was important to them. They therefore adopted many strategies intended to help individual children fit better into the group or at least not hinder its functioning. The teachers in the more open classrooms tended to seek strategies that would adapt the instructional process and the classroom environment to a wide range of needs; they still insisted on mannerly behaviour but provided a greater variety of tasks and ways of doing them. Problems with conduct and routines therefore arose less frequently in these classes.

It appeared, therefore, that a more open structure made it easier for the teachers to respond to individual needs. Since a large part of their teaching was material-based, they had more time for individual attention and coaching. The traditional teachers also tried to provide these, but often had to do so during recess, lunchtime, or after school. Their children also might use these periods to finish their work, while the more flexible schedules of the open structures allowed for greater variation in pacing and more self-chosen activities. In some of the traditional classes, less able students received little activity time, although most of the teachers adopted strategies to increase this.

It was clear from the strategies developed and the ideas exchanged among the teachers that they were capable of handling changes which they viewed as beneficial. Change was always consistent with the teacher's general approach, but most of the modifications were adapted to the particular children or groups involved. Since many therefore had the effect of personalizing the curriculum for the individual, they may be viewed as movement towards more child-centred programs. For this to occur, the teachers had to have a clear grasp of their objectives and to realize that most objectives could be attained in many ways. Moreover, where a particular child could not attain the desired aims, work provided at a simpler level often facilitated the child's eventual achievement of the goals. For example, children who could not yet read participated in groups creating and using Big Books, thus furthering their general literacy skills. In several cases, observer input was relevant in planning such modifications.

The teachers' use of feedback from the observations indicated the importance of the consultant's role in the classroom. Often, an objective view of a problem suggested strategies that could be adopted immediately. The teachers thus achieved much satisfaction and confidence to try further changes. Several remarked that information and support from other professionals were the most important aspect of the project for them.

Recommendations

As a result of the discussions and observations, it became evident that certain practices and procedures enhanced the teachers' problem-solving strategies. The recommendations that follow are based on the teachers' views of successful practices observed during the project.

1. As a mode of continuous professional development, periodic meetings among small groups of teachers from different schools should be held to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and teaching methods. The presence of a consultant or co-ordinator may help to focus concerns, but is not necessary for the effective functioning of the group.

2. Within a school, a primary team (all teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 3) can work to plan activities or special events and share scarce equipment and materials. Such a team can also work for individual children who may go to another room for work at a different level. Where possible, the grouping of primary classrooms along one corridor facilitates the work of such a team. For example, a sand table may be placed in the hallway for use by children from several classes, and teachers can informally exchange news and views at odd moments during the day.

3. The principal should understand and support the need for materials and activities in the primary classroom. It is helpful if the principal works with the primary team in planning and implementing curriculum.

4. Aides, adult volunteers, or older students are of great assistance in meeting the needs of individual children. Aides can coach children who need special help, listen to oral reading on a one-to-one or small-group basis, assist with story-writing or take dictation, and engage in many other activities of use and interest to children. All these practices bring with them the additional benefit of increased adult attention of a positive nature.

5. More consultation is needed between special education and classroom teachers. Where remedial methods are being used for a child, all parties benefit if the methods are followed up in the regular program, with suitable curriculum modifications adapted to the child's mode and level of learning. An aide or volunteer may assist with special instruction.

6. Where serious concerns occur, teachers should feel free to call upon the principal or a consultant for assistance. Such a call is in no way a reflection upon a teacher's competence, and should be seen as a professional consultation where an objective opinion is sought. If possible, an observation period should be arranged, with discussion and strategy-planning afterwards. (Note to principals: This process requires time and should not be just a hasty exchange between phone calls.)

7. The focus should be on underlying problems rather than on the obvious symptoms. For example, disruptive behaviour during work-time may occur if children do not understand the task or if it is too easy for them. Suitable work or explanation of the procedures may enable them to proceed as desired and remove the stimulus to misbehave. Reprimands may also reduce misbehaviour, but provide no academic benefit. Other misconduct may suggest that classroom rules are inappropriate.

Similarly, poor work habits often indicate not merely a lack of self-control but also a need for different kinds of learning activities. Messy work, for example, sometimes results from a minor motor difficulty rather than lack of care. Systematic and repeated wrong answers often imply incorrect assumptions or reasoning on the part of the child. For example, if a series of incorrect answers in arithmetic results from misapplying a method, redoing the exercise is useless until the method is understood.

8. The focus should be on developmental objectives and sequences rather than on specific learnings. When these are understood, the teacher can provide alternate ways of attaining the objectives or provide tasks that will promote development towards them. Thus, all children can do useful academic work successfully and develop a positive self-image as a learner. (For instance, a child who has not yet acquired a stable concept of number may not use a workbook correctly, but engaging in activities involving correspondence, counting, or seriation will provide experiences that will help to develop the concept eventually.)

By focusing on general objectives, the teacher can also integrate self-chosen activities into the curriculum, since the selection of materials is directly related to the learning outcomes intended. This integration is especially important in schools or communities where play must be justified as an approach to learning.

None of the above recommendations is revolutionary; all are widely practised. Nevertheless, observation showed that they were far from universal even in this small sample.

Their effectiveness when used, and the teachers' willingness to experiment, however, suggest that their implementation would not be difficult.

Finally, teachers' admittance of the importance of professional recognition of their work in the classroom cannot be overstated. Teachers, like their pupils, need to be aware of their growth and success, and to receive feedback about their practices. In adults also, self-concept and self-esteem are essential to development. Whether provided by principals, consultants, or other educators, acknowledgement of teachers' professional competence is an indispensable component of the continued development of effective teaching.

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APPENDIX: PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Identification of Problems

Because the teachers explained their concerns in their own words, the descriptions of any problem varied considerably. It was therefore necessary to clarify the definitions for the classroom observers. Two members of the research team classified the descriptions independently, then met to discuss any uncertainties. Ambiguities were resolved by consulting the teacher involved or checking with the classroom observer.

Thirty-four whole-class problems and 645 individual problems were counted. The latter were sorted into twenty categories under six main headings (see table 1). The miscellaneous category included all items that did not fit into any of the other categories.

Continued observation throughout the school year indicated that some of the categories included similar behaviours. For example, "disruptive behaviour" and "behavioural routine" problems often looked alike to the observers, and similar strategies were effective for both. The same was true for "peer passive", "self-confidence," and "initiative" problems.

Self-confidence appeared to be related as much to self-direction as to emotional well-being, and was so reclassified (see Volume II). However, because the teachers' perceptions were the basis for our study, the original classifications have been preserved in this manual. Five of the six superordinate categories have been omitted, however, because classroom observation did not distinguish among them.

TABLE 1: PROBLEMS CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

I. Personal Constitution and Development		
1.	Health	All health problems affecting pupils' learning or development (e.g., heart defects, hearing loss, colds causing frequent absence, obesity) or organization of the classroom program (e.g., haemophilia necessitating unusual safety precautions)
2.	Language	Developmental lags in language acquisition, inadequate range of verbal skills in comparison with peers, speech defects or difficulties, ESL situations
3.	Motor Skills	Problems of co-ordination, large- or small-muscle control
4.	Immaturity	General lack of development as compared with classmates; intellectual lag due to inadequate background experience or stimulation
II. Social Skills		
5.	Adult: Active Negative	Deliberate rudeness, defiance, or disobedience to adults
6.	Adult: Passive Negative	Non-compliant, withdrawn, uncommunicative behaviour; "spaced out", unresponsive demeanor
7.*	Peer: Disruptive	Behaviours (other than those in categories 8 to 11) disturbing other children or disrupting activities
8.	Peer: Aggressive	Hitting, bullying, fighting
9.	Peer: Bossy	Bossy, meddlesome behaviour
10.	Peer: Leads Trouble	Inciting others to misbehave
11.	Peer: Follows Inappro-priately	Following the example of others who misbehave
12.	Peer Passive:	Appearing alone or apart from other children; lack of social skills, inability to relate to other children
III. Emotions		
13.	Unhappy	Dejected, sad appearance, lack of spirit or happiness, crying
14.	Self-Confidence	Poor or undeveloped self-image, sense of failure, lack of self-esteem as learner or social being, excessive need for reassurance
IV. Self-Direction		
15.	Initiative	Inability or reluctance to choose a task when choice is given, selecting only known or familiar activities, avoiding risk
16.	Behavioural Routines	Failure to comply with customary classroom procedures such as lining up, listening silently to announcements, putting away equipment, responding when called, waiting for attention

17.	Academic Routines	Problems with work habits such as completing assignments, participating in groups using centres, listening and responding
18.	Management Routines	Difficulty in understanding or following routines such as use of supplies, getting permission, moving from centre to centre or around the school
V.	Academic Skills	
19.	Academic Difficulty	Difficulties in understanding or performing academic work accomplished by classmates or age-group
VI.	Miscellaneous	
20.	Miscellaneous	Wearing glasses, twin dependence, stealing, short attention span, giftedness, etc.

*The numbers and ordering of Problems 7 to 11 have been changed from Volume II.

Development of the Strategies

As each problem was discussed by the teachers, ideas were aired about likely solutions and the teacher involved decided which would suit the given situation. Often several teachers adopted a given strategy if they thought it would work in their classes. Classroom visits then permitted the observers to compare different teachers' implementation of a strategy and often to convey suggestions between teachers ("It seemed to work better when ...").

When a strategy proved successful, the teachers usually extended its application. Thus, having used Big Books for poor readers, one teacher tried them for children who were disruptive in reading groups and then made their creation a class activity. Similarly, work contracts were designed first to help children choose more activities, then for a child who was often ill, and finally for improving academic routines.

As a result, most strategies were applied to many problems, and most problems had several strategies.

The strategies were sorted, by the same method as the problems, into seventeen categories. However, as the year progressed, the set was expanded to twenty (see table 2). At the end of the year, all strategy applications were checked with the teachers to confirm the observed results and to ensure that the descriptions were correct.

TABLE 2: STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED FOR INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS

1. Increased teacher attention (more time and contact; talking and listening to child; frequent work checks and feedback)
2. Positive teacher-pupil interaction, encouragement, or reinforcement
3. Reduced pressure: avoidance of criticism or reprimands
4. Modified program content or organization; curriculum adaptation (e.g., work at individual pace or level, alternatives to group lessons, special reading groups, increased activity time)
5. Non-intervention ("watch and wait")
6. Direct instruction in routines or skills, individual discussion of feelings or social behaviour
7. Games for co-operation (e.g., Shadows, mirroring a partner's actions)
8. Modification of the physical setting (e.g., grouping, reseating or moving away from other pupils, introducing or moving learning centres)
9. Removal to another class
10. Behaviour modification
11. Logical consequences
12. Group discussion
13. Parent contact or involvement
14. Referral to special services
15. Working with aide (a volunteer, older student, or peer tutor)
16. Working in another class
17. Enriched Kindergarten program (modifications to enhance the development of individual children, e.g., more art, motor activities, directions, choice as needed)
18. Not regarding situation as a problem
19. Requiring quality work or effort (providing challenge; conveying expectations of excellence)
20. Miscellaneous (including retention in grade)

Most of the strategies are self-explanatory. A few, however, require clarification.

Non-intervention (Strategy 5) as a deliberate tactic must be distinguished from failing to recognize or to deal with a given problem. It is better characterized as "watch and wait" or "monitor and observe". Most of the non-intervention strategies adopted by the teachers in the study were used with children whose problems seemed likely to be temporary (for example, during adjustment to a new school or to a family crisis), or resulted from a lack of maturity

to meet the ordinary expectations of the class. Many were not really cases of non-intervention; both observation and teacher reports indicated a higher level of teacher-pupil interaction and modified teacher expectations for these children. Indeed, one teacher called her strategy "watch and support", indicating the importance she gave to frequent encouragement of a child. Moreover, in several cases, Strategy 5 was used along with other strategies, including contact with parents.

Some of the other applications of non-intervention strategies involved children who were thought to be "slow to warm up" (Thomas and Chess, 1977; Thomas, Chess, and Birch, 1970). In some cases, former teachers had indicated that these pupils were slow to adjust, but had done well after the first two or three months of school. One child, however, continued to be timid well into January, when one day she responded to a story by writing, "We have rabbits". The teacher asked her if she could bring one in and show it to the other children. She did, they were enchanted, and her whole pattern of interaction with the teacher and the other pupils changed. The teacher re-named this a "wait and pounce" strategy.

Four teachers did not choose Strategy 5 at all, three of them preferring to take action in any situation which seemed problematic. Since the fourth was a generally interventionist teacher, this result was at first rather puzzling. However, in discussing a child whose parents called him disruptive, another teacher remarked, "I just decided I wasn't going to think of him as a problem." By viewing him simply as a child who needed some positive attention and assistance to learn the rules, she prevented a "problem" from developing.

It became evident that several others were using this approach, and that it was another non-interventionist strategy (Strategy 18). In all, six teachers used this strategy; for one, it was the most frequently used.

Non-intervention took another form in some of the Kindergarten classes. In some cases, teachers viewed a child as not yet thriving because of slow adaptation, shyness or lack of social skills, immaturity, etc. However, they viewed the problem as one which would be solved by "time in a rich Kindergarten environment". This and similar phrases appeared so often that they were classed as a separate strategy (Strategy 17), particularly because most of the teachers did take steps to provide an especially responsive and stimulating atmosphere adapted to the needs of these children. Six of the Kindergarten teachers specified this strategy for

individuals. The maturationist teachers did not do so, partly because they regarded few children as having problems and partly because they considered this not a strategy but a general principle of developmental teaching.

Strategies 10 and 11, behaviour modification and logical consequences, are similar in that both are intended to help children adapt to rules or routines. Both are non-punitive. Behaviour modification, however, requires the teacher to take the initiative--to structure the situation so that the reinforceable behaviour will occur. In Project Thrive, positive reinforcement worked best when employed to increase desirable behaviours. The teachers used shaping techniques, at first rewarding every instance of the desired behaviour, and later, when the pattern was established, moving to less frequent reinforcements. Thus, the technique depended on the teacher's ensuring and rewarding the desirable behaviour.

Logical consequences do not require such structuring of the situation. The teacher explains the rules and the result of non-compliance. If the children do not follow the rules, they are responsible for the consequences. For example, one teacher told the children to listen, so that they would know what to do. A child who did not listen did the wrong exercise, then still had to do the right one.

Dreikurs (1964) stressed the difference between logical consequences and punishment, which is imposed by adults to control behaviour. However, the application of logical consequences requires the adult to allow children to experience the outcomes of their own actions, and hence to accept responsibility and control of their own behaviour.